

Bavarian News

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U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Bamberg, and Schweinfurt

April 18, 2007

VES students top annual reading goal

by JODI WARD
Staff writer

If each minute read was equal to one mile, Vilseck Elementary students would have read their way around the Earth 18 times.

According to Vilseck Elementary Librarian Terry Diaz, Vilseck students read a cumulative total of 460,593 minutes last month, nearly doubling the program's goal.

Now in its nineteenth year, the month-long Red Hot Readers program, created by now retired reading specialist Ahni Rush has excited and inspired VES students to read more than ever before.

"This is the highest number we've had in the history (of the program)," said VES literacy coach and event

coordinator Johnetta Gillies. "And we don't have as many students as we had in the past."

"As a librarian, I could really see the excitement grow this past month," said Diaz.

"We had many more people coming to the library and checking out books."

The idea behind the program is simple: kids love a challenge, and they are given one in the form of the RHR program every March. This year, VES students were challenged to read 249,016 minutes.

Throughout the month, reading events and activities were held at the school, but only minutes read outside of school could be logged on their "read-o-meter" and counted toward the goal.

"We were afraid that because we

have a whole new community, that everyone wouldn't buy into (the program). But we got just the opposite reaction," said Gillies. "We had 37 children (kindergarten through 5th grade) read 2,000 plus minutes."

"I think the success of this program shows the excitement and encouragement of the new Stryker community," said Diaz. "The Vilseck community really embraced (Red Hot Readers Month) and supported it with their families. It shows that we have a good, family centered group here."

Throughout the month, VES held numerous reading events including a weekly reading time on Thursday mornings called "Muffins for Mom,

See PRINCIPAL page 21



The Cavazos family reads at the Vilseck Elementary library before school during RHR Month.

Photo by Terri Diaz

2SCR troops compete for EIB glory

Story and photo by JODI WARD
Staff writer

It's just 7/16 inch in height and 3 inches in width, but some infantry Soldiers will give their blood, sweat, and tears to be awarded this medal.

It is the Expert Infantryman Badge, and hundreds of 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment Soldiers are vying for the right to wear the prestigious pin.

Often referred to as the EIB, this distinctive award—an infantry musket in silver on a rectangular blue background with a silver border—is among the most highly prized decorations for infantrymen. It can only be earned by an infantryman and sets him apart not only as an infantry Soldier, but as a Soldier who knows his stuff.

"It's the mark of a man, they say," explained Sgt. 1st Class Stanford Cunningham of 3-2SCR Iron Company.

Even before Soldiers are able to begin testing, they must first pass the prerequisite 12-mile road march in "full battle rattle," a rigorous PT test; qualify as an expert with their weapon, and successfully complete day and night land navigation.

The strict requirements narrowed the field of contenders before the competition had even begun.

"The prerequisites take their toll," said 2SCR Operations Sgt. Maj. Patrick Ogden. "By the time they're done we've lost a significant percentage."

To be awarded the EIB, the service member must complete a testing phase which is the culmination of weeks of training, leading to a final evaluation period.

See EIB page 21



2SCR's Pfc. Kellen Black, performs a movement under fire task during EIB training, April 3. In this task, Soldiers are given five minutes to make it through the course, properly using the low crawl, high crawl, and 3-5 second rush without being hit to receive a "go".

Home-based business tips keep it legal

by ROBERT SZOSTEK
Customs PAO

The first point is that U.S. Forces plated vehicles are for your personal use only. Using one as part of a business is illegal.

"An example would be if you used your USAREUR-plated van to deliver goods to customers or pick items up from suppliers," said David Kuik, acting chief of services, USAREUR Customs Executive Agency, in Mannheim, Germany. Register your business vehicle in the German system, he advised.

The second point is that packages that you send or receive for your business must go through an express shipping company or the German postal service. The APO system is a privilege for your personal use only. Therefore using it to send or receive business wares is not allowed.

Third, you must declare any goods intended for resale to German Customs when you bring them into the country. Goods sold in the post or base exchange, AAFES catalog and commissary are tax-free so you cannot buy anything there for your business either. Not surprisingly, using your VAT form to support your business is off-limits too.

"Military regulations say that when people perform services or sell goods on a frequent and recurring basis, they are operating a home-based business," Kuik stated. He added that you are

See CUSTOMS page 10

Gen. George W. Casey sworn in as 36th Army chief of staff

Army News Service

Gen. George W. Casey Jr. became the 36th chief of staff of the Army April 10, assuming the position from Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker.

Casey was the first commander of the Multi-National Force-Iraq, a coalition of more than 30 countries, until February. He had served as Schoomaker's vice chief of staff before deploying to Iraq in 2003 to assume command of the coalition.

Guest speakers at the ceremony included Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates and Acting Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, both of whom praised Schoomaker for his accomplishments and the positive changes he made to the Army after being called from retirement in 2003 to assume the top uniformed Army position.

Geren, who hosted the ceremony, called Schoomaker a great teacher and Soldier, and honored him for nearly four decades of active service characterized by sacrifice, courage and devotion to duty.

"It's been a privilege to work alongside this extraordinary leader, this great teacher, a man who has given so much for his country and the Army he loves," Geren said. "Pete Schoomaker is a patriot, a man who has always put the country first and always answered the call to duty."

Gates also expressed his gratitude to Gen. Schoomaker, thanking him for his vision and leadership.

"Challenging times require extraordinary vision and leadership, and Pete has shown both those qualities," Gates said. "He has entirely changed the manner in which our Army is trained, deployed and organized."

In his parting words, Schoomaker reaffirmed that today's Soldiers are still the Army's greatest strength, because war will continue to be fought in the human dimension.

"While technology has changed our Army, there can be little doubt that when you look into the eyes of our warriors today, as I have in the last four years, I see the same patriotism

that George Washington must have seen at Valley Forge," Schoomaker said.

"I have looked into the eyes of today's warriors and I am proud to report they continue to exceed every expectation for courage, dedication and selfless service - they are the heart of all we do, they are our future, and they demonstrate strength, compassion and warrior ethos," he said.

Casey spoke last and thanked both secretaries, the president, Congress and Gen. Schoomaker for their faith in his abilities to lead the Army.

"I'm proud to be taking charge of an Army that's regarded as the best in the world at what it does," Casey said. "I have watched the men and women of our Army in action in the most demanding combat environment. I take great pride in the courage, the confidence and the commitment of our Soldiers and civilians to both the ideals that have made this country great and to making a difference in our world. They epitomize what is best



Photo by Cherie A. Thurlby

Acting Secretary of the Army Pete Geren swears in Gen. George W. Casey Jr. April 10.

about America.

"They and their families carry heavy burdens in today's war with a hard road ahead, yet their willingness to sacrifice to build a better future for others and to preserve our way of life

is a great strength for our nation," he said. "We are Army Strong and I could not be more proud today to be a Soldier and to stand shoulder-to-shoulder during this time of danger and uncertainty."

Q&A

What do *you* most *like* about living in *Germany*?



Tony Marshall
"I like the travel, I have been to Bamberg. It feels fun and happy."

Cielo McClain
"I like the school here in Germany. I like making new friends, it is so easy, you just talk to them."



Rashad Rogers
"I like Easter and football, the PX and playing snow fights."

Lindsey Burns
"I like the snow. I really like the snow. I also like to go to the playgrounds a lot and to play in my neighborhood."



Michael Batson
"I like making new friends, and also jumping into snow. I like that the houses here are older... I miss Wal-Mart and my dog."

Leanne Foss
"I like my friends here and I like riding horses."



Logan Kirk
"I like that I get to go to different places. I was in Venice, soon Paris and Rome... Here we have to drive all the way to Wuerzburg to go to Taco Bell."

Sarika Oberman
"You can walk to the bakery. There are a lot of ice cream restaurants in Germany, and I love that. The ice cream is better, because there is only one spoon of sugar."



More volunteers needed for our Youth Sports programs

Most of us thought spring was in the air, particularly with the bushes blossoming.

But, there was ice on the windows this morning and during the inactivation of former USAG Franconia, the temperature dropped to below freezing. So, winter weather may still hit us before spring officially begins.

Remain safety conscious, plan for longer trips, and watch out for black ice on our roads.

AFAP Conference

We just recently finished the Grafenwoehr-Vilseck AFAP. I appreciate all the time and effort the community volunteers devoted to the project.

Some have even been selected to move on and participate at the IMCOM-Europe AFAP program.

I take the AFAP as another gauge on how things are going in the community. I value all comments, and while I cannot promise I can fix everything the way volunteers want (regulatory guidance, staffing and a more than likely cutback on funds due to the interaction between the U.S. legislature and the Executive branch), all items will be analyzed to determine if we can feasibly accomplish them.

There are, however, some issues we can fix and will aggressively resolve. They include:

■ There will be new gym hours in Vilseck. After an extensive survey and a decision by the senior members of the community, the

hours will be:

Monday-Friday 5 a.m.-9 p.m.

Saturday-Sunday 8 a.m.-8 p.m.

These hours, which exceed our funded hours, will commence as soon as staffing needs are resolved.

■ We will modify shuttle service and in fact are working with IMCOM-E to determine if we can get more drivers/ routes.

Even if that does not occur, we will modify routes (meaning some current ones will stop as 'shuttle service' is a finite capacity) and increase the number of trips between Vilseck AAFES and the new AAFES in GRAF (more than likely closer to when the Grafenwoehr AAFES/ Commissary opens up).

We will also look into the shuttle service for in-processing that arrives at 7 a.m. at Bldg. 700, and re-look the appointments in Landstuhl to determine if this justifies a shuttle service.

■ We expect USO to come to the community. We are looking for a location and exact date for their arrival.

■ We will fix the "Commander Special Permit" signs.

■ We are going to relook at what the MPs do and attempt to better enforce community standards (loud noise, child supervision in the housing areas, etc.). We have to balance this need with presence patrols at clubs in the surrounding community. Quite frankly there are never enough MPs but we will look hard at this.

Sexual Assault Awareness

April is National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. As I have said many times, one incident is too many.

We need to continue to get the word out

concerning identification of possible assaults and the services the garrison offers to those who may have been assaulted.

Jay Velis, my SARC is the POC for the garrison program. He will offer multiple information and awareness booths throughout the community and is more than happy to bring training to your unit or organization as needed. Contact Jay at jay.c.velis@us.army.mil for more information.

Youth Sports Needs

Once again, I need your help. Thanks to offering two major sports this spring, we have had over 500 children sign up for sports.

Of course, now we are struggling with getting the right number of volunteer coaches. Of particular note is that the younger groups (age 7 and below), really need family involvement (almost a one-on-one parent to child involvement) to ensure they learn the sport right.

Help us make this a great event for your children and turn it into a family event in which the entire family can participate. For more information, contact Dan Frazier at DSN 476-4037, CIV 09662-83-4037.

We will continue to review the AFAP concerns and work to see if we can resolve them and report back to you the resolution.

Again, thanks to all of you for your input and for helping me make this the best place to live and serve in Germany.

*Col. Brian T. Boyle
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

Purses ultimate sign of femininity?



JACEY ECKHART
On the Homefront

I skulked around the purse section at Marshalls. I peered through racks of leather straps willing this woman to put down my purse. She had nine purses in her cart. How come she had to pick up mine?

It wasn't exactly my purse. Yet. But I saw that red bag three days before and I didn't buy it because I was worried that it wasn't red enough or that it wasn't big enough and I wasn't really committed to buying a purse yet anyway and I thought \$48 was too much to spend for a purse or maybe \$48 wasn't enough to spend on a purse but mostly I didn't buy it three days ago because I hate purses so much.

Woo boy. Maybe I should call Military One Source about this. I'm sure they have a professional someone to discuss this crisis.

Because I am 41 years old and I am still not a purson. I still do not speak the language of the purse. This is a problem. Men are supposed to be able to communicate in the idiom of box scores and RBIs. Women are supposed to speak the language of the purse. I do neither.

It sure seems like every other military wife can talk style and size and quality of a potential handbag. I jiggle the change in my pocket as they claim to feel naked without a purse. When I go home I am forced to observe the women in my family bond over purse shopping in a ritual akin to nit picking and back scratching among other primates.

I can handle that. It's only when I get around women speaking in the dialect of the luxury handbag that I freak. Those women know why you would spend hundreds of dollars on a bag with someone else's name on

it. They can tell a real designer zipper pull from a fake one. They not only know the name of that designer handbag that costs \$15,000, but they could recognize it across the tarmac in a snowstorm that would close the Denver airport.

Not me. That bag could be strapped into the seat next to me on the plane and I would not even notice. I might even think it was put there for my convenience to catch my empty soda can and used yogurt cup.

I'm pretty sure this is a bad sign, a tick against my femininity, a marking that I am not as womanly as I think I am, not as girly as I ought to be.

My girlfriend Dawn says that she's fine with her purse, she only feels this unfeminine when she tries to buy a blazer. She's afraid every other woman takes one look at her shoulders and runs to the bathroom to scream with laughter about how she is built like a man. That's OK, because those gals are all already in there hysterical over my purse.

I know I ought to be content to keep on

“You can’t impress purse people. They know each other already. They recognize each other’s markings.”

keepin' on, to carry my money in my pocket, my keys clipped to my jeans. But some occasions do require a purse — the right purse — a purse that is of the variety that tells the

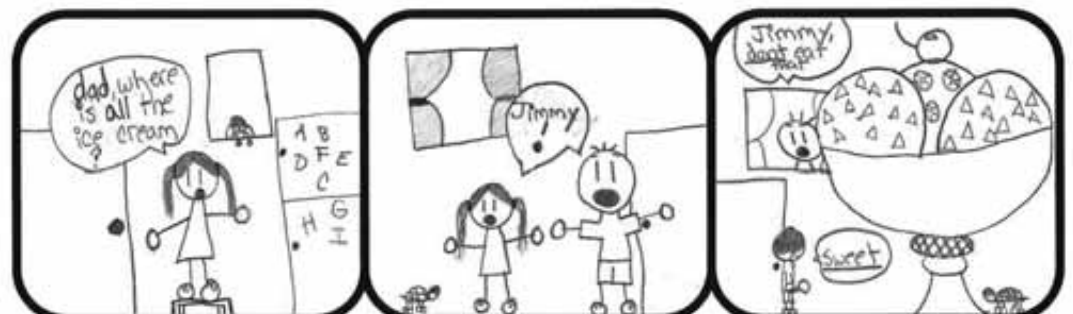
world I am a woman's woman and that I speak the language of women.

My daughter says that's my entire problem. "You can't impress purse people. They know each other already. They recognize each other's markings," Kelsey said. "Just do like I do and pick a purse you like. Gaaah. I'd think you'd know that by now."

Yeah, so do I. But I keep hoping. I keep

wishing that someday I would stalk the aisles of the world, proud and free and female in my complete confidence in my purse. Until then, I guess I'll have my Military One Source magnet to comfort me. Sure wish I had a purse to keep it in.

A 19-year military spouse, Jacey Eckhart is a nationally syndicated columnist with *CinHouse.com* and the host of "The Jacey Eckhart Show for Military Families" (www.cinhouse.com/jacey).



Cartoon by Kassie Galvin

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USAG G Commander
Col. Brian Boyle

USAG G Acting Public Affairs Officer
Nick D'Amario (475-6417)

Bavarian News Editor
Adriane Foss (475-7113)

Assistant Editor
Katie Cowart (475-7113)

Vilseck Correspondent
Jodi Ward (475-1600)

Grafenwoehr Correspondent
Bilyana Atova (475-1600)

Hohenfels Correspondent
Garry Barrows (475-1600)

Food & Culture Columnist
Martina Bias (475-1600)

Schweinfurt Correspondents
(354-1600)

Mark Heeter, CI Chief
Kimberly Gearhart,
Sandra Wilson,

Ansbach Correspondents
(475-1600)

Jim Hughes, CI Chief
Ronald Toland

Dickson farewells Graf, sets sights on SGM Academy, new beginning

by ADRIANE FOSS
Editor

Although she's thousands of miles away from Borger, Texas, it's that small town upbringing that continues to influence everything she does—no matter where in the world the Army sends her.

Master Sgt. Verlene Dickson spent the last two years as the first sergeant of U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, one of her most challenging roles since she joined the Army 19 years ago.

Challenging, but not overwhelming, for someone who was promoted to staff sergeant (E-6) after only four years in the Army and to master sergeant (E-8) in 12 years.

Dickson is serving as a civilian misconduct assistant until July when she will PCS to the Sergeant Major Academy in El Paso.

The original life plan, said Dickson, was to become a nurse and settle in the small, close-knit Borger, where she and her sister were brought up under the watchful eye of a loving grandmother.

"Everybody knew everybody in Borger," she said. "It was a happy go-lucky place."

Twelve years younger than her sister, Dickson was not without playmates.

"My sister was so much older so we didn't play together, but I had so many cousins. There was all of the other grandchildren," she said. "Everybody in the family lived across the street, down the street, or next door. I didn't even know that 'other' people existed because we were always together."

"Our school segregated when I was in the fifth grade, and prior to that it was just me around my family, and most of the neighborhood was family or like family," said Dickson. "I called the lady across the street Aunt Frankie my whole life. I didn't know until I was 13 or 14 that she wasn't in the family."

Despite the racial tensions of the 1960's, Dickson said her grandmother sheltered her and her sister from prejudice.

Grandma made the difference

"My grandmother had raised us differently," she said. "We didn't have those problems. She believed that you should treat people the right way, regardless of race or anything else."

"I remember her sitting in front of the TV crying when Martin Luther King Jr. was killed. I remember," said Dickson, "because I was a little girl sitting there looking at her and her saying, 'What are we going to do now.'"

Dickson said it was her grandmother's loving tolerance and pursuit of excellence that drives her today.

"When I was small my grandmother told me that when you do a job, do the best at it that you can. And she was showing me how to make biscuits (at the time), but she said even if you sweep the streets, do it well and don't ever quit something once you start it," said Dickson. "And I never forgot that since I was 7."

"That's just part of my character—



Master Sgt. Verlene Dickson handed over charge of Garrison Grafenwoehr's HHC during a Dec. 18 ceremony. She will attend the Sergeants Major Academy in the fall.

not to quit, to do the best job I can. I sleep well at the end of the day because I have done my best and tomorrow is another day, and I'll get up and do the best I can again.

"And regardless of how tired I get," she said, "whether it's an event I'm coordinating, teaching someone, leading Soldiers, whatever, it has been instilled in me to never quit."

Change of direction

Dickson's grandmother died 20 years ago in May, but not before instilling in her the strength and courage that would lead her to an Army recruiter's doorstep.

"It was her quest that I go to college," said Dickson. "And she would always tell me she had to quit school because she had to pick cotton. I don't think I would have ever left her. I think I would have stayed right there with her."

By the time her grandmother died, a 28-year-old Dickson had received an associate degree in nursing and was working two jobs and swamped with school loans.

In order to return to nursing school and get her bachelors, she followed the advice of a recruiter who told her the Army would pay off her loans and give her additional money to continue her nursing degree.

After graduating basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C., and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Lee, Va., Dickson was qualified as a material storage handler. Her first assignment was as a mail clerk in Kitzingen, Germany—a position that would prove crucial to her fast-tracking through the ranks.

Double duty

"One thing that helped me to get promoted fast was my time as a PFC, working in the mailroom," said Dickson. "Everybody would receive Army correspondence courses. And since I was older when I joined, all of my friends were older—sergeants mostly—and they asked me if I could help them with some of their courses since I was sitting in the mailroom all day. So I was helping them, and I started doing my own correspondence courses."

By the time she attended the E-5 promotion board, Dickson said she

had maxed out the military education requirements, something she would continue to do throughout her career. She spent two years in Kitzingen followed by a two-year stint in Fort Bliss, Texas. She then served a three-year tour in Kitzingen, where she was promoted to sergeant first class (E-7) shortly after her arrival. (She was assigned to Fort Sill and Korea before returning to Germany for the third time.)

"Because I made my E-5 so fast, I really didn't know my job as a squad leader so I had to jump through hoops," explained Dickson. "I really had to do a lot more—move faster, think longer, and work harder to take care of my Soldiers."

But Dickson doesn't credit her rise through the ranks to her education and hard work alone.

"I had a lot of mentorship from my platoon sergeants and some of my peers," she said.

Just not good enough

During a tour at Fort Sill, Okla., Dickson was the noncommissioned officer in charge of an Army warehouse. Her warrant officer supervisor, it seemed, wouldn't cut her a break. She said she worked hard, but nothing she did seemed to satisfy him.

"Whatever work I did, he would always give it back to me to improve," she said. "I would complain about it. Nothing was ever good enough! But what I didn't realize at the time is that he was training me."

That training came in handy in Korea when not 30 days after arriving, Dickson was given charge over an ill-kept, disorganized warehouse that the unit had recently entered into a Department of the Army Supply of Excellence competition.

"The condition of the warehouse was awful, ... and the warrant officer running the warehouse was a pilot who had been in a crash and couldn't fly anymore so they switched him over to logistics, so he was not familiar at all with the job."

"But I said, 'Okay, since we have to do it, we're going to do it.' We broke it down and rebuilt it back from the bottom up."

Dickson and her Soldiers worked sunup to sundown seven days a

week through the bitter cold month of February, with time off for religious observances, to square away the near-impossible hangar-sized structure and 3,000 lines of equipment.

"The inspectors were so hard on us, and I didn't think we had won. I brought all of the Soldiers in and said we did the best we could, and that was it. Some of them were mad at me and complaining," she said.

The Pay-off

"But afterward, when we found out we won, some of them cried," said Dickson. "They were so appreciative. Some of them learned so much about their jobs."

The unit commander informed her that she and the warrant officer would have to go to Washington, D.C., to receive the award.

"I led the (Soldiers) to get there, but I really didn't do the work," she explained, "so I chose one of our specialists to go in my place... He went and took his wife. The reason I chose him was because he was one of the few Soldiers who never complained and always tried to get everyone else motivated, and that meant a lot to me. There was always a smile on his face, even on the bad days."

Dickson said leading Soldiers has been for her the single most enjoyable experience in the Army.

"I like to be able to train Soldiers, getting them from Point A to Point B," she said. "Teaching them something they don't know, but at the same time learning a lot myself."

Dickson said as a first sergeant she made it a priority to meet her Soldiers families "because you actually meet the Soldier once you meet the wife or husband and children. And as a leader, you take on the responsibility for the entire Soldier—his family, his livelihood."

All things equal

But that's not the only responsibility Dickson has taken on over the last two decades in the military. She has become a de-facto champion for equal rights, ethnic observances, and other special emphasis programs.

"I want the community to know that there are other cultures, and the more you know about someone's

See **DEDICATION** page 4

Spotlight on Education



Name: Sally Friedrich

What grade/subject do you teach? Fifth grade.

Hometown: Danville, Ill; hometown of Dick Van Dyke, Gene Hackman, Bobby Short, and Donald O'Connor.

How long have you been a teacher? 27 years

What do you like best about teaching? Seeing the light of learning come on in children's eyes.

What advice can you give students to help them succeed in school? Get organized and put effort into everything you do. Always be ready to ask for help. No one person can know everything, and teachers are here to help you. Remember that mistakes are an opportunity for learning not a measurement of failure.

Don't forget to tell them you read it in the Bavarian News !

Visit us at www.grafenwoehr.army.mil/sites/news/bn/current_BN.pdf



Dear Demetrius, I have decided to begin a weight loss program. I am 5'4" and 170 pounds and want to lose 30-40 pounds for the summer. When can I expect to see the results? What should I be

HEALTHY EMPOWERMENT

BY DEMETRIUS WILLIS

looking for in the "safe steps" toward this weight loss? Signed,

"Wanting the Summer Body"
Lisa

Dear Lisa, We gain weight slowly beginning at birth, and many of us eventually reach a point where we want to turn back time. Often, we

want the weight off now!

Many products and programs capitalize on people who want instant gratification by promising instant results with very little effort on the part of the consumer.

Remember that it did not take a month to put the weight on, so it will not take a month to take it off.

To lose weight, intake must be less than expenditure. In other words, you must take in less calories than you use.

Safe weight loss is based off of

losing more fat and less lean tissue (or building muscle).

This results in a safe weight loss of about ½ - 2 pounds a week. Losing much more than this results in the loss of muscle mass or water weight.

Fast weight loss often results eventual regaining the weight loss and perhaps even more.

A safe program will also include a diet that includes the recommended amounts of vitamins, minerals, water, fiber and

protein. Safe caloric restrictions should not be less than 1,200 calories for women or less than 1,600 calories for men.

Good luck, and don't give up!

Demetrius

Send your nutrition and fitness questions to usagnews@EUR.army.mil. Demetrius Willis is a registered dietician and a certified personal trainer.

Dragoon 7 PT challenges senior NCOs

2SCR event cause NCOs to take much needed time for own fitness

Story and photos by JODI WARD
Staff writer

Senior noncommissioned officers are often too busy sharpening the combat skills of their younger counterparts to take the appropriate amount of time for their own training, but on April 5 senior NCOs with the 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment participated in the Dragoon 7 PT Challenge.

The Challenge is a seven-event, battle focused physical training exercise.

“We never do stuff for ourselves,” said 1st Sgt. Andre Williams of 1-2 SCR B Co., “It’s a lot for the officers, a lot for the lower enlisted. I really think we need more of this- building camaraderie among the ranks of our fellow (senior NCOs),” he said.

Before the sun had even risen and the morning frost melted away, the men and women were geared up in their full battle rattle, ready to start the day’s event.

After dividing into six teams outside of the Regiment’s headquarters, a full equipment check was performed on each contender’s ruck, with points awarded for each one correctly packed.

Teams were given a map of the route and a list of 2SCR history questions to be answered along the way.

After a quick run to the commissary parking lot, teams had to push a five-ton Family Medium Tactical Vehicle as far as possible.

“The hardest task was definitely the FMTV push,” said Regimental Command Sgt. Maj. Victor Martinez. “We were pushing that thing and it wasn’t moving, so we were like, okay, forget it and moved onto the next challenge,” said Martinez, organizer of the PT challenge.

“It wasn’t worth the 10 points, so we decided to make it up (on another event).”

Once teams were worn out from the truck push, they moved out to Dragoon Field. For this challenge, half of the team was designated to move equipment from one end of the field to the other, while their teammates were busy assembling a box of weapon parts.



After successfully completing the first aid challenge, teams 4 and 5 paddle back across Big Mike Lake. Once they reach the shore, it’s a race to the finish line.

Once back on the PT route, teams encountered their next challenge—two detainees whom they had to search. Teams were awarded points for each sensitive item found.

From there, teams raced off to Big Mike Lake where they hopped in a raft and paddled across the fog-covered surface.

“I integrated the rafting challenge because you just never know,” Martinez explained. “We may have to do a water-born operation across the Tigris River at some point, you just have to be prepared,” he said.

Once across the lake, teams rushed to the aid of several “wounded” Soldiers, who were

screaming out for help. While applying first aid, teams were hit with simulated fire, creating a hectic, but realistic war-time scenario.

Each team was awarded points based on application of first aid to each of the wounded Soldiers, which included inserting real intravenous needles and dressing fake wounds.

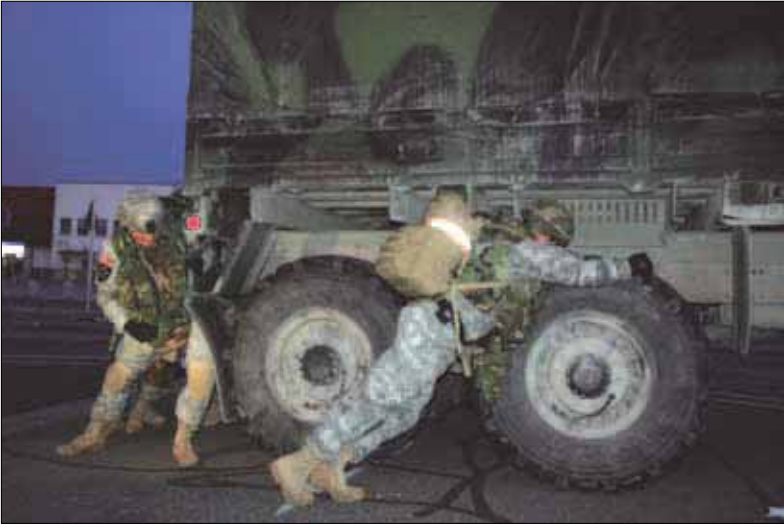
After all casualties were treated, the teams paddled back across the lake and raced to the finish line at Bldg. 301, the Fiddler’s Green coffee house.

1st Sgt. Andre Williams of 1-2SCR’s B Co. said that the rafting event was the most “challenging”, “because if you don’t use the team work concept, you’ll go in a circle,” he said. “Everybody is working to achieve the overall goal, which is to get the boat across (the lake).”

When each of the six teams arrived at Fiddler’s Green, points were tallied and prizes awarded, but Martinez said that it wasn’t just the winners who gained from this event.

“It’s fun, we’re building camaraderie, getting to know one another. That’s what is most important. We’ve got all kinds of war stories from this. Tonight we’ll be talking about this over a beer,” said Martinez, “or maybe two.”

Team 2 struggles to push a 5-ton FMTV across the commissary parking lot, April 5 as part of the senior NCO Dragoon 7 PT Challenge. They manage to score 20 points on this event before moving on to their next challenge.



Dedication to equality, pursuit of excellence a way of life for Dickson

Continued From Page 3

culture, the less fear you have of them,” she said. “If you’re ignorant to different personalities and character and what drives people to do what they do, chances are you won’t be able to perform to the highest level you can – in the Army or in life.”

Making a difference

In an effort to ensure all people are educated about different cultures and ensure fair treatment for all persons, Dickson has volunteered, organized, developed, implemented, and served as program manager and advisor for African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, and Native American history months; Holocaust – Days of Remembrance; and Women’s History. She has mentored pregnant

Soldiers in physical fitness and even developed educational ethnic observances within the local national community.

“To me, whenever I do an observance, I don’t just do it because it is that time of month for observances, but I try to put something in there that really educates people about the observance,” she said.

“If I’m doing a gospel concert, I’ve got to educate you on where gospel music came from, why it exists, and why we continue to sing it today.”

Dickson’s dedication to equality causes and her pursuit of excellence is more than a strong conviction. She described it as a God-given gift.

“If it were a talent, it would be something that I could get tired of

doing, but I think to think of it like a hand,” said Dickson.

“Each of my fingers have different roles. My little finger has a different job from my thumb, but they all work together for one goal. If I lost one of my fingers, my hand wouldn’t operate fully like it should,” she said. “I consider myself like one of those fingers – with a special and unique job that was given to me to do, just to me.”

A bigger purpose

“I don’t feel like I’m on the earth to just draw a paycheck or breathe the air around me,” said Dickson. “I feel like I’m here to make a difference in someone else’s life.”

Dickson is no stranger to unique. That, she said, is one of the highlights of being in the military.

“Meeting different people, the

different cultures. I actually do stay in contact with people I’ve met all over the world,” she said. “I meet no strangers. The military has taught me that. Just (a few weeks ago), I had a two-hour conversation with a company rep who called my house about a tape order that had not come in.

Although she is looking forward to her new future as a sergeant major, she said she will miss Grafenwoehr.

“Graf is very family-oriented. Because we are overseas, we tend to get better support, and I’ll miss that,” she said. “I have enjoyed being here. I have enjoyed the people, the support, and even the challenges.”

The confident leader she is today is admittedly worlds away from the painfully shy young girl raised in the

1960s Texas Panhandle, but it is a welcome change.

And one that has come full circle.

Dickson said she is looking forward to attending the Sergeants Major Academy this fall and looks forward to returning to the U.S. to visit family. Her sister and mother live in El Paso, Texas, where the academy is located.

She also has three adult children and nine grandchildren who live in various locations throughout the U.S.

“(My career) has really went by fast. I’m really looking forward to going to the academy, and I don’t have any place I want to go after that,” said Dickson. “The needs of the Army are fine with me. I look at everything as a new challenge and take it one day at a time.”



Month of the Military Child

As part of the Month of the Military Child, ACS’s new parent support program set up at the PX April 4 to get the word out about the various free programs they offer, including infant massage and a weekly play group.

Kirstin Hurt, 23, with her 2-month-old son Josiah, said her favorite is the play group. “I love the play group. It is really great to meet other moms,” she said.

Staff photo by Jodi Ward

Don't Forget!
Purchase your tickets
before boarding the
train. To switch the ticket
machine menu to
English, look for the
British flag. See below.

Fest time is the best time in Hohenfels

The entire Hohenfels community is eagerly awaiting the start of our 37th annual German American Volksfest which runs from Friday until May 1.

This year's fest will begin with the traditional Grand Parade at 4 p.m. on Friday.

The parade begins at the commissary and runs all the way to the beer tent on the fest grounds.

Our Grand Parade includes clubs and organizations from the German and American community, along with a horse drawn beer wagon



from Schmidt Brau in Schwandorf, which is providing the beer for this year's fest.

Immediately following the Grand Parade, we will conduct the official opening ceremony and tapping of the keg.

Our host city this year is Hohenfels and Burgermeister Bossle will be on hand to assist Col. Vandal with the taping of the keg honors.

In an effort to really kick-start the festivities, all rides on Friday from 4-6 p.m. will be 50 Euro cents. Then, at 7p.m. on that opening night, we will have a free concert in the fest tent by the famous Chris Wittl and Friends Band.

Those of you who attended last year know that when Chris Wittl gives a concert, you had better arrive early or you won't find a seat. The fun continues on the first

weekend with Children's Day on Saturday featuring the Children's Kasperl Theater of Regensburg, and on Sunday we will host the second annual beach volleyball tournament.

As always, we will have fireworks on each Saturday night and live bands in the fest tent every night.

April 25 is Family Day and all rides are half price and we will feature the second annual human Foosball table in the midway where soccer players are attached to long metal bars that limit movement to only side to side and replicates the table top Foosball game only with live players.

The second weekend of the fest, April 28-29, features the Hohenfels Volksmarch beginning in downtown Hohenfels.

On Saturday, we will hold the

second annual Hohenfels Cooking Classic which is an American county fair style competition in which the ladies of Hohenfels vie to create the best desserts in the community.

Celebrity judging takes place at 1 p.m. Saturday in the fest tent, and big blue county fair type ribbons will be awarded to the champions.

Then at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday is the second annual Burgermeisters vs. Hohenfels Leadership Soccer Championship on Tiger Field. Last year's inaugural game ended in a 4-4 tie so both teams are excitedly looking forward to this year's game.

The Hohenfels leaders' team is so pumped up that they briefly considered holding more than one practice before this year's game, but then determined it was important not to peak too soon. So we'll stick

to the one-practice format that worked surprisingly well last year.

April 29 features the Bavarian Olympics at noon in front of the fest tent where competitors will compete in beer crate stacking, log tossing, and holding a full maas of beer at arm length in a test of endurance.

The fest will end May 1 - a German holiday - with live bands playing until the fest grounds close at midnight.

With all of this fun, there is no doubt that fest time is the best time in Hohenfels. So please put on your best dirndl and lederhosen and join in the fun. Prost!!

*Lt. Col. James Matheson
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Hohenfels*

Elementary school Garden and Gallery Club brings atrium to life

Story and photo by GARRY BARROWS
Staff writer

The Hohenfels Elementary School Garden and Gallery Club has only been in existence for three years, but is making a real impact on a number of eager fifth and sixth graders who like to work hard to make things grow.

Fifth grade teacher and club sponsor Lisa Zimmermann had no real background in gardening, but was simply frustrated by the plainness of the atrium building, a separate structure from the main elementary building where the fifth and sixth grades are housed.

"It needed something," Zimmermann said. "We needed something to make it look nicer, and the kids needed something to do outdoors. Sometimes the kids don't get a chance to work outside."

Hence the birth of the Garden and Gallery Club.

Help from several supporters, including school gardener Hans Kaiser, former school principal Susan Cothran, parents, and friends have made the club a success.

The first area of attention was under the main atrium window of the building where the club built a long flowerbed.

Next, Zimmermann and Kaiser worked together to establish three raised gardens in the entry area of the atrium building where the club does much of their work.

This spring the club has mini greenhouses in the school where they are germinating peanuts, mini pumpkins, and sunflowers until they can be transported outdoors.

These greenhouses are located in the indoor gallery also maintained by the club. As many as 25 large plants are thriving along the interior windows of the gallery adding color and a vibrancy to the atrium.

The plants include blackberry, strawberry, and raspberry for fruits; parsley and pumpkin for vegetables; and chrysanthemums, daffodils,



Sponsor Lisa Zimmermann help Jonathan Estrada, Josh Halverson, Andrea Grantham to clear one of three raised garden beds the club has.

marigolds, petunias, and fettehennes for flowers.

Fifth grade club member Joshua Halverson enjoys being in the club.

"I like putting out the mulch," he said. "It gets your garden looking good and makes the flowers nicer too."

Besides raking, digging, seeding, and pulling weeds, the club takes nature walks and identifies different plant types and species, dries flowers for classroom decoration, turns seeds from their flowers into 'teacher appreciation' gifts, and uses the sunflower seeds to feed area birds throughout the winter.

Charlotte Hammer, also a fifth grader who successfully blends ballet in the fall and garden club in the spring, prefers getting her hands dirty.

"I like to do the planting and weeding," she said. "When you plant, over time you can watch

the various stages of growth. And that's cool."

At the end of each meeting, members log special information like temperature, soil conditions, and garden progress in specially designed journals.

Zimmermann says her goal for this spring's club is to have all members be able to hold a worm and have a bee fly past without being afraid.

"It's important for them to realize that these creatures are valuable to gardeners," she said.

Zimmermann and members are looking forward to adding a rainwater tank to provide the garden with more plant-friendly water as well as exploring various fundraising ideas to be able to purchase a small outdoor shed for equipment storage.

Donations are accepted.

Hohenfels Soldier killed in Afghanistan

by ALLISON BATDORFF
Stars and Stripes Mideast edition

A Soldier from the Hohenfels, Germany-based 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment died of wounds suffered in a roadside bombing April 7 in eastern Afghanistan, the Pentagon said April 10.

Army Spc. Conor G. Masterson, 21, died Saturday after a bomb exploded near his vehicle, according to a Defense Department press release. His mother told The Associated Press that Masterson was a medic and was on patrol when he was killed.

The family, who lives in Masterson's hometown of Woodbury, Minn., got the news on Easter morning, she said.

"He was always so excited as he learned each new (medical) procedure and helped somebody," his mother told The Associated Press. "He was really proud, and we were really proud of him."

Masterson had been married less than a year to his wife, Lorena, and planned to attend college to study medicine, his mother said.

"He was a comedian. And it didn't matter what was happening, he made you laugh," she said.

Masterson joined the Army in 2005 and was assigned to 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment in Hohenfels. During its six-month deployment in Afghanistan, the battalion is working with a Romanian battalion in the International Security Assistance Force, according to Joint Multinational Training Command spokesman Maj. Eric Bloom.



ICE gives community chance to voice praises, complaints

by BRIDY GODWIN
Special to the Bavarian News

The Interactive Customer Evaluation system, also known as ICE, is a Department of Defense Web-based customer feedback system that was initially tested with the 100th ASG in Grafenwoehr, and then implemented throughout the DoD in 2001 as an instantaneous tool for rapid feedback. It serves providers by addressing concerns such as child care, shopping, facility management, education, travel, and transportation.

In all honesty, my initial perception of ICE was an outlet for folks to voice their dissatisfaction on assorted services or lack thereof in local military communities.

I had also heard various feedback in other communities from co-workers and friends that comments were submitted but they never received a response and nothing changed. The value added of using the system seemed a waste of time and energy. USAG-Hohenfels has completely changed my opinion.

Lt. Col. James Matheson and his staff have taken the ICE program where it was supposed to go when it was implemented in 2001.

"I wanted to change the prevailing community members and garrison employees perception of

“ I think it's a wonderful program. It's a good way to let our bosses know we are doing our job. ”

Pfc. Bader

the ICE system as a negative thing, and wanted to turn it into a positive thing," he explained.

A comprehensive report is completed by the tenth of every month on every ICE comment that has been submitted in the community and turned in to Matheson, who personally reviews each entry and provides comments or questions to the directorates to whom the ICE comment pertains.

Each directorate is required to respond to the author of each negative comment provided that person writes contact information.

However, there is an additional aspect that Matheson has thrown into the mix – recognition. He has taken ICE and turned it into a morale booster for all personnel who work in the Hohenfels community.

The positives are a two part process: First, the ICE League was started in August 2005 to recognize facilities which receive the most positive ICE comments.

Matheson is a big sports fan, so it stands to reason that the ICE league is modeled after baseball style league standings.

For the non-sports fans, it's a nice way to identify effective employees and reward their hard work.

For everyone else, it's a contest to be taken seriously (just think Final Four basketball playoffs). Teams, or facilities, are ranked every month according to how many positive and non-positive comments they receive.

The league standards will be printed every month in the Bavarian News and announced every two months at the garrison's Hail and Farewell.

The coveted ICE League pennant is presented in a farcical ceremony to the top customer service facility in Hohenfels.

The Sunrise Lodge has been the number one facility in Hohenfels with zero negative comments

since October 2006.

The second process involves presenting garrison commander coins to employees who have received positive comments from patrons who recognized their outstanding services -- above and beyond the customer service norm.

Matheson drives around Hohenfels on a monthly basis and presents the coins with the now famous catch phrase "You've been ICED."

One recipient, Pfc. Bader said, "I think it's a wonderful program, it's a good way to let our bosses know we are doing our job."

She also stated it was nice to receive public recognition from the commander for a job well done, and she wished other communities would do the same.

Log on to the ICE Web site, http://ice.disa.mil/index.cfm?fa=site&site_id=201, and tell Hohenfels personnel and facilities how they are doing.

Where and what are the good things that have happened to you? Where are there potential opportunities for positive change?

List your ideas for improvement today. Trust me, they are noted and implemented whenever possible.

Most importantly, make sure your favorite service provider is recognized. Log on today so someone can hear "You've been ICED!"

212th Combat Support Hospital conducts support training, gauges own deployability

Story and photo by GARRY BARROWS
Staff writer

The 212th Combat Support Hospital, formerly known as a MASH or Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, conducted support training for the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team in Hohenfels March 15 - April 5.

“We were here to augment the 173rd medical needs,” said Maj. Aric Bowman, the operations officer for the 212th CSH. “But also to exercise our medical system, to assess our ability to deploy.

In addition to their responsibility to the 173rd, the CSH conducted sick call for military personnel to give the Hohenfels Health Clinic a break. The dental section of the hospital was especially busy with 166 customers visiting from several areas of the community during the first two weeks.

“We are 100 percent a working hospital and 100 percent a mobile hospital,” said Bowman. “The primary (Operating Room) can be set up in six hours and the entire hospital in 24 hours.”

The CSH had a 44-bed hospital set up for this training exercise, although they would deploy downrange with a reserve unit attached to boost the total to 248 beds.

While at Hohenfels during this rotation, the decision was made not to change the procedure for serious injury. If someone broke their leg during a non-rotation period, the patient—after being examined and stabilized at the clinic—would be transported to a German hospital in Regensburg, about 45 minutes west of post.

If someone broke their leg during the rotation, despite the fact that the CSH could easily and effectively treat the injury, the patient would be taken to Regensburg. The reason is that any delay in care, because of the uncertainty of treatment responsibility, could be dangerous or even fatal.

Knowing the final treatment destination from the outset removes that potential.

“It just prevents confusion,” said Bowman.

The hospital appears to be a sprawling collection of interconnected green tents, but the inside tells the true tale. Inside the tents are formidable service capabilities.

There are two intensive care units, a total of 24 beds staffed with four Registered Nurses, four licensed practical nurses and two ward masters.

Urgent care “patients” with gunshot wounds, head injuries, and patients with ventilators are among those who will be treated in the units after they have been triaged and stabilized by the fully staffed emergency room.

“We have a great staff,” said ICU Commander Maj. Robert Gahol. “Our ICU can care for anyone from a newborn to a geriatric patient.”

In a combat hospital, why would there be a need for newborn or geriatric care?

“Humanitarian aid,” explained Gahol. “When you treat a local population, it is an asset to have those capabilities. We’re here to save lives. They would receive the same level of care (as any Soldier).”

The 212th CSH has also installed new medical communications computer software that can track and provide patient info at any point in treatment and at any location in the facility. Until this installation, an order for laboratory services, dietetic restrictions, treatment direction, or other needs would be handwritten and ‘travel’ with the patient. Now, this user-friendly system allows quick access to the patient’s file and fast addition of treatment needs and requirements.

“It just speeds up the entire process,” said Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Navara, noncommissioned officer in charge of the laboratory. “And it frees up manpower to do more medical procedures rather than going back and forth looking for the doctor or the patient.”

While the CSH is equipped to handle practically any medical emergency, some situations require a more concentrated approach. Combat stress control is an example. When additional treatment is prescribed, it is provided on a corp level by independent CSC teams working closely with hospitals throughout the Iraqi and Afghan theatres.

Maj. Brian Crandall, a CSC fitness team leader, describes the interaction with hospitals like the 212th CSH.

Once a patient is determined to have an emotional treatment need by hospital staff, he would be called in “to assess the situation and determine what we need to provide to the Soldier,” said Crandall.

There are two main levels of concentration, prevention, and fitness. The prevention portion features a team consisting of a psychiatrist, a



212th CSH emergency room personnel concentrate on a simulated casualty during training exercise in Hohenfels.

social worker, and two techs designed to provide training and education to help and strengthen a Soldier in both home front and battlefield issues.

When treatment for combat stress is prescribed, the Soldier is sent to a fitness treatment team. This team consists of a doctor, normally a psychiatrist, a specially trained therapist, a psychiatric nurse, and up to six techs.

The teams find there are numerous causes of stress including anxiety, stress from family and home, combat and battlefield issues, and deployment problems.

When a fitness team provides treatment to a Soldier, they are never considered a patient. They remain what they are—a Soldier—and continue to do personal training and handle most other daily duties.

Generally the fitness team combat stress treatment consists of a plan of restoration that includes from one to three days of rest, sleep, relaxation, and even play a basketball game, for example. In addition, one-on-one counseling in areas like anger management and stress reduction are provided as well as educational goal setting therapy.

It is seen as a very efficient and valuable commodity as the fitness teams produce a 98 percent return-to-duty rate.

“Prevention is a key to good mental health,” said CSC team member Sgt. Noel Roman. “You guys (home front service providers like Army Community Service) do a lot. A lot of cases we get in a combat zone relates to family problems, maybe more than anything else. So providing help to the families (at home) allows the Soldier to feel more at ease, to be able to do their mission better.”

Hospitals like the 212th CSH are an essential element of battlefield success. Caring for the Soldier’s psychological and physical well-being is perhaps the most valuable dual mission responsibility of the facility, and the confidence a Soldier has in the hospital is critical to that.

“This hospital can deploy with short notice and provide all the capabilities of a small community hospital,” said Hospital Commander Col. Angel L. Lugo.

“We provide an assurance to our Soldiers that if they get hurt, and they get back to us, they’re going to live!”

National Police Transition Teams making a difference

by GARRY BARROWS
Staff writer

As the Global War on Terrorism continues, deploying to hotspots worldwide has become a way of life for many of our Army warfighters.

In addition to their myriad duties, U.S. and Coalition Forces help to provide direction, support, and instruction to local law enforcement units. This support allows the local national governments to maintain and enhance democratic rule for their citizens.

One such unit, the National Police Transition Team, deployed to Kuwait Feb. 24, 2006, and to Iraq shortly thereafter.

Made up of 88 individuals gathered from units across the U.S. Army in Europe spectrum, the NPPT conducted training for this mission Jan. 5 – Feb. 11, 2006—much longer than a normal regiment training cycle.

Once deployed, the 88 Soldiers divided into 11 teams to begin to provide their support to six battalions and two brigade headquarters of the Iraqi National Police.

Their mission was to advise the commander of the Iraqi National Police on how to fight the counterinsurgency.

“We did some very good things with (the INP),” said Lt. Col. Steven Vass, team chief of the 5th National Police Brigade Transition Team. “The U.S. and their Coalition partners provided the resources. The challenge was helping the Iraqi National Police to become a viable element of the Iraqi Security Forces, capable and willing to defend all Iraqis, regardless of religious or tribal affiliation.”

The INP are not your standard “traffic cops,” but rather a federal police force that answers to the Ministry of the Interior and is separate from the Iraqi Army, although capable of army-style operations.

One of the missions included the U.S./Coalition and Iraqi forces working together to set up checkpoints constricting access into and through Baghdad. According to Vass, the most

effective technique the INP used to reduce the number of improvised explosive device attacks was creating traffic control points where vehicles are searched to stem the flow of weapons and IED materials in to the area.

Although NPPT participation was crucial to these missions, it was the INP who took the lead.

“On a patrol, we wanted the Iraqi to have the majority of interaction with the civilians,” said Maj. Horace Carter, the brigade intelligence officer and advisor for the 3rd INP Brigade NPPT. “We would always take the backseat. We wanted to stay in the background.”

INP interaction with the civilian population is vital, said Carter.

“A raid or an arrest might take between 20 and 30 INP personnel in addition to our advisors,” he said. “In situations like that, the Iraqis would always take the lead. It is important to have the Iraqi people trust and have confidence in (their own) police.”

With each shared mission, each roadblock, each experience, cooperation between the NPPT and INP increased and their efforts began to show in improvements.

The shared efforts help to combat the two conflicts going on in Iraq. One, explained Vass, is the main one that U.S. Army troops are mostly involved in—fighting the insurgency. The second is sectarian violence that makes daily news headlines. The sectarian violence includes attacks that are aimed at Shiites or the Sunnis, Islam’s two largest denominations.

“It is a different culture,” said Vass. “They have different priorities. To them it’s tribal, it’s family, it’s territorial.”

“Part of our mission was to make sure the members of the INP did not favor one group over another,” he said. “But that is a challenge. Politics play a big part (in nearly every decision.)”

Carter and his team lived at Forward Operating Base Union 3, located in a heavily guarded (by Coalition and private security firm

personnel) section of Baghdad known as the Green Zone or International Zone. This approximate five-square-mile area is where many of the diplomatic missions and embassies are located.

In his two-to-a-room set-up, Carter, who roomed with Major Enrique Torres, described the living quarters as similar to a college dorm with 12 people on a floor sharing a community bath/shower room.

Carter said their living arrangements made the 11-man NPPT teams a tight-knit unit.

“We did everything together,” he said. “We became very close.

While U.S. and Coalition Forces are practically on call 24/7, the NPPT teams’ basic work schedule was Monday to Thursday. Little organized activity took place on Friday, the Islamic holy day of the week, in respect to Muslim religious custom Saturday mornings, however, proved busy for the teams.

During rare free time, many of the Soldiers visited the gym, computer cafés, or participated in MWR-sponsored activities such as chess tournaments or bingo.

“Or we would listen to our music” said Carter.

Outside of the FOB in the Green Zone, other “attractions” included fast food restaurants like Burger King.

That style of FOB living arrangement may soon be outdated as some units deploying to Iraq may see their platoons assigned to Iraqi FOBs.

In an effort to retain INPs, the NPPTs focused a great deal of time on improving the INP quality of life, explained Vass. During the deployment, the overall livability of the INP compound was markedly improved with kitchens and modern cooking equipment installed along with water purifiers and coolers.

Concrete walls were placed around the INP locations to protect against insurgent attacks, and air conditioning units was installed in the INP living quarters.

As Vass put it, “when it’s 120 degrees, no one wants to do anything.”

Vass described a pivotal issue in understanding the culture and the fundamental Islamic belief of Insha’allah, translated “If God Wills It.”

Vass said he and a Marine NPPT were on a night patrol with a large group of INP personnel. They were inspecting various checkpoints when a sniper’s shot rang out. The Americans moved for cover trying to figure out what direction the shot came from. The Iraqis stood still, motionless where they were and looked down at the Americans with displeasure.

Vass said their translator told them “they think you are cowards.”

Once they reached a safe location, Vass told the INP leadership through his interpreter that it is better to be a smart and safe “coward” who is capable of fighting another day than a foolish and dead “brave man.”

Vass said his argument had little effect on their “If God Wills It” thought process.

Vass said his concept that “God gave me the common sense to use my mind and my equipment properly to stay alive” makes for a more effective philosophy for a war fighter, but it’s a concept that will take time for some Iraqis to adopt. Still, Carter agrees that many improvements have been made.

“There used to be a time when the Iraqis would get in a firefight, and they would just cut and run,” said Carter. “Now when we found ourselves in a firefight, they would stand right beside us and fight.”

“Now we are seeing them step up to the plate and fight for their country,” he said, “Rather than dishonor, there is pride in standing side by side with the American forces.”

No one knows how long it will take before there is peace in Iraq. Many people believe that depends on the Iraqi people, but the sacrifices that the NPPT and other American Soldiers make will go a long way in shaping that peace.

What’s Happening

Grafenwoehr/Vilseck Briefs

Veterans Affairs briefing held at Vilseck theater tomorrow

Tomorrow: Briefing is open to everyone from 8 a.m.–noon at the Post Movie Theater, Vilseck. Registration is required. Contact ACAP DSN 476-2055 to reserve a seat. Learn about VA Programs to include: Home Loan Guarantee, Disability Compensation, Vocational Rehabilitation Training and Montgomery GI Bill.

Red Cross courses offered

The following community training courses are available:

- First Aid: Vilseck office, Saturday, 8 a.m.-noon, \$25
- Babysitter’s Training: Grafenwoehr office, April 23-25, 3:30 p.m.–6 p.m., \$35.00

Pre-payment is required for all training classes. Stop by either the Grafenwoehr or Vilseck office to make payment (exact cash, check, or money order).

Call the Red Cross offices at DSN 476-1760, CIV 09662-83-1760 or DSN 475-1760, CIV 09641-83-1760.

Entrepreneur’s workshop

Are you interested in starting your own business? The Gruenderzentrum (Business Development Agency) in Grafenwoehr offers a free two-day business start-up seminar tomorrow-Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

For registration, contact Ms. Gabriele Murry, at g.w.murry@t-online.de. Include your name, phone, and e-mail address.

MWR talent show slated

April 25-26: Sign-Up Now. This community event, brought to you by MWR, is open to all ages (U.S. military, family members, dependents and civilians).

Prizes include cash and other great giveaways. Call DSN 475-6167.

Student school registration held today through Friday

Student registration for the next school year, starting August 27 will be held at schools today through Friday.

Even if you are not sure where you will be August 27, register now. There will be no school for students Friday. This day is for parent-conferences and registrations.

If your orders or your employment status has changed since last enrollment, please bring in the amended copy of your orders, along with your old orders.

Grafenwoehr Elementary School: Today-Friday, registration for all grades including new kindergarten students and grades 1-5. Hours are 8:30-10:30 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. Child must be 5 years old by October 31 to begin kindergarten.

Vilseck Elementary School: Today-Friday, 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m. in the VES lobby. “Kindergarten Round-Up” will

also be held during the same dates and times. Your child must be 5 years old by October 31.

VES and GES fifth graders going into sixth grade: Currently enrolled 5th grade students who will be moving over to Grafenwoehr Middle School, GMS registration date is Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. in the main office at GMS.

Grafenwoehr Middle School: Children going into 6th, 7th, or 8th grade, Friday, from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at the GMS main office.

Vilseck High School: Students going to 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. Today-Friday, 8:30 -11:30 a.m. and 12:30-3:30 p.m. Today and tomorrow re-registrations is in Guidance Office. Friday registration is in School Library.

Please bring the following documents to registration:

- re-registration packet
- sponsor’s orders listing child’s name as a dependent
- sponsor I.D.
- original immunization records
- student’s birth certificate or passport and social security number
- name and phone number of two emergency contacts
- name, address, and phone number of a permanent US contact
- previous school records/previous school contact information

Garrison School Update

Tomorrow: VES hosts “Dining at the Ritz” at 11:30 a.m. to celebrate student success by honoring students with high academic achievement and students that are the most improved in academic achievement for the quarter.

Today-Friday: Parent-Teacher conferences and student registration.

Monday: Vilseck High School soccer at VHS at 10 a.m. VHS Falcons versus Black Forest Academy.

April 28: CYS Kinderfest at Vilseck Memorial Fitness Center 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Vilseck Falcon Soccer at home starting at 10 a.m.

Parent to Parent workshops

- Tomorrow–The Real World... what are you doing? Vilseck High School at 6 p.m. Parent to Parent has teamed up with the Real World to provide a series of workshops on preparing your high school student for the future. This month’s workshop will include topics dealing with making the transition out of high school.
- April 24–Surfing the Waves of Education: A web-based workshop. Stop in anytime between 11 a.m.–1 p.m. at the Vilseck Digital Training Facility, Bldg 355. This workshop will help you become familiar with the many different electronic resources available to help the mobile military child as well as the college or career bound student.
- April 25–The Importance of Parental Involvement: Noon in the Vilseck CYS conference room, Bldg 224.

Research shows that the more involved the parent is in the child’s education the more academic success the child experiences. Learn ways to become involved in your child’s life in the classroom as well as in the community.

■ May 1–Surfing the Waves of Education: See April 24 class description.

Register now for Cub Scouts

Grafenwoehr Cub Scout Pack 261 is currently registering boys in grades 1-4. Upcoming programs include family camping, a space derby and rocket building competition, Cub Scout Day Camp and Resident Camp-fishing, archery, and bb shooting.

E-mail bsa-pack261@hotmail.com or call Jean Boyle at CIV 09641 835308.

Sexual harassment refresher course made mandatory

All civilian personnel in the IMA-E region, to include military service members that supervise civilian employees, must complete this refresher training for FY 2007 at the following link: <http://training.newmedialearning.com/psht/usarmymiae/message.htm>.

All new employees that have not taken the initial classroom training within the past two years must do so prior to participating in this online course.

To schedule initial POSH training, contact the EEO Office at DSN 475-6390/8360. Next training is scheduled for May 4. Local Nationals are also encouraged to complete this training.

Gate closures announced

Due to planned construction at Vilseck Gate 1 to enhance gate security, traffic traveling to and from Rose Barracks will share one lane for both inbound and outbound travel.

Until tomorrow: inbound lane closed

April 23-26: outbound lane closed

Military Personnel Division moves to Grafenwoehr

From Monday to April 27, the USAG Grafenwoehr Military Personnel Division (formerly 38th PSB) will be moving its services from Bldg. 245 in Vilseck to Grafenwoehr Bldg. 244, Room 202 on the second floor.

There will be limited personnel support. For emergency situation contract Mr. Hurley at DSN 476-2233 or SSG Jenkins/SSG Slaats at DSN 475-6526.

Bulk items collection schedule

Curbside bulk items collections on post and in leased housing areas in Amberg-Sulzbach:

- Vilseck on post housing: Tomorrow
- Vilseck on post barracks: Friday
- Vilseck off post LH-areas: Monday (Fitzthum Village and surrounding areas, Leonhardstr., Hierold-Str., Schlicht, and Sorghof)
- Hahnbach, LH Am Gaisbuehl: Tuesday
- Auerbach, LH Koestlerring: Tuesday

Vilseck sort program, DPW - O&M, DSN 476-2600 / CIV 09662-832-600.

Tactical vehicles parking not allowed on Graf Main Post

Tactical military vehicle parking is prohibited on Grafenwoehr Main Post. Tactical vehicles will be permitted on post for official military functions at the TISA warehouse and fuel point. Call DSN 475-7166 for more information.

Hohenfels Briefs

High school registration, parent conferences Friday

Parent conferences and pre-registration will only be held on Friday. This will be a one-day event. For more information, call DSN 466-3162.

Elementary school re-registration held Friday

Re-registration for returning students at Hohenfels Elementary School will be held on Friday in the foyer of the elementary school.

Sponsors are encouraged to carefully review and complete all forms in the packet prior to registration, as incomplete packets will not be accepted.

Sponsors should also be sure that their children are current on all the new vaccination requirements and that the school has copies of immunization records that are up-to-date prior to registration.

Registration packets for incoming kindergarten students can be picked up on Friday, and kindergarten registration will be held on April 26. Sponsors registering children at either event need to present a current copy of orders and a completed packet on the day of registration.

Questions about registration procedures or packets can be directed to the elementary school office at DSN 466-2829. Questions about immunizations or current shot records can be directed to the school nurse at DSN 466-2739.

Scholarships available for military dependents

Twenty-five \$1,000 scholarships are available for military dependent children as a part of an essay contest. Applications must be postmarked by April 23.

Scholarship information, eligibility requirements, and applications are available on the organization’s Web site at <http://homefrontamerica.org>.

Additional duty safety course slated for April

Supervisor and additional duty safety officer course for Hohenfels Garrison includes tenant offices and units IAW AR 385-10. The Department of Army Safety Program requires that an additional duty safety officer (Soldier, SGT E-5 promotable or higher rank or equivalent civilian) be appointed for each organization or unit.

The appointed additional duty safety officers or NCOs for tenant units are also invited to attend this course.

Register for this course for either April 26 and 27 (a one day course) from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (with a lunch break) at the Garrison Safety Office, Bldg. 388. POC: Hohenfels Garrison Safety Office, DSN 466-1670/4626.

Ramstein holds risk communication workshop

A U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine Introductory Risk Communication workshop will be held May 7-9 at the Ramstein Officer’s Club.

Register online at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/risk> or e-mail Suaquita.perry@us.army.mil.

A faxable registration form is also available upon request. For local information, call DSN 486-7099 or e-mail Laura.Mitvalsky@us.army.mil.

Central Issue Facility closed Monday to April 27

Hohenfels CIF will be closed from Monday to April 27 to conduct the annual 100 percent inventory.

Construction causes road and gate closures

The road between Gate 1 and the town of Hohenfels will be closed due to road construction until 8 a.m. Friday. Gate 1 will remain open but will only be accessible from the Grossbissendorf side. A detour route for those living east of the road closure is via Raitenbuch and Grossbissendorf to Gate 1. Gate 2 will remain closed.

Passport office announces closure for training

The passport offices in Grafenwoehr

and Hohenfels garrisons will be closed through tomorrow. Limited services will be provided by the Vilseck passport office during this time frame. POC is Mr. Hurley at DSN 476-2233/2037 or hiram.hurley@us.army.mil.

Parking lot closed, alternate parking available

The parking lot adjacent to Bldgs. 88 and 15 will be closed for a period of five weeks starting on April 26. Additional parking is available at the bowling center and Bldg. 100. Pedestrian access to Bldg. 15 will be available. The POC is M. Schmidt at DSN 466-2515.

Thrift Shop needs volunteers

Our Thrift Store is in need of volunteers. If you can spare any time to help volunteer call the Thrift Shop at CIV 09472-83-2798. All help is appreciated. Remember that you can volunteer with your child/children ages 12-15. Teens 16 and older can volunteer without a parent. We now pay childcare (up to 20-25 hours/month)!

Lt. Dan Band visits Hohenfels

May 8 at 7 p.m. at the Hohenfels Post Gym, Bldg. 88. The Lt. Dan Band covers everything from Springsteen to Linkin Park, from Aretha to Hendrix, There’s something for everyone, and each show highlights the musical diversity of the band, as well as the passion and energy each member brings to the stage.

Whether it’s performing for the troops overseas or a local club crowd, the goal is to have fun and rock the house! Visit www.ltdanband.com for more information! Concert open to all ID cardholders.

Battle of the Bands, Stars of Tomorrow May 26-27

IMCOM-E and US Army Garrison Ansbach will host the 27th Annual IMA-E Battle of Bands May 26, and Stars of Tomorrow talent contest May 27.

Contests will be held daily at 2 p.m. at Katterbach Fitness Center. Winners will be announced at the end of each day’s competition. For band the prizes are first place: \$500 and trophy, second place: \$250 and trophy, and third place: \$150 and trophy. Individual awards are for best guitarist: \$100 and trophy, best bass guitarist: \$100 and trophy, best drummer: \$100 and trophy, and best vocalist: \$100 and trophy.

Stars of Tomorrow categories are Male or Female Vocalist, Vocal Duet, Vocal Solo- Self Accompanied, Specialty Solo, Instrumental Solo, and Specialty Group. Awards are first place: \$500 and trophy, second place: \$250 and trophy, and third place: \$150 and trophy .

Applications and rules for entries can be obtained in the entertainment office, Bldg. 40 during business hours or call DSN 466-2340 for information.

Chaplain Happenings

- **H20 Discipleship Group** for teens in Junior High or High School meets Thursday evenings at 5 p.m. The current theme is relationships. POC is Chris Howard, Club Beyond representative, at DSN 466-4793 or CIV 09472-834793.
- Students in junior high or high school are invited to **The MUG Coffee House** each Wednesday evening at 5 p.m. POC is Chris Howard, Club Beyond representative, at DSN 466-4793 or CIV 09472-834793.
- **Catholic Women of the Chapel** meet for Bible study Thursday mornings from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the Hilltop Chapel Center. For more information, call the Catholic Office at DSN 466-2226 or CIV 09472-83-2226.
- **Protestant Women of the Chapel Evening Program** is May 2 at 6 p.m. at the Hilltop Chapel Center. We will have a guest speaker from Hungary come and share about orphanage ministry. We will have a pot-luck dinner of our favorite childhood dishes. As always, watch care is provided for children aged 6 weeks-5 years. POC is Chaplain Baumann at DSN 466-1570 or CIV 09472-831570.
- **Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** is held the last Friday of each month in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. The next Adoration is scheduled for April 27. For more information, contact the Catholic Parish Coordinator office at DSN 466-2226 or CIV 09472-83-2226.
- **Christ’s Commandos (C2)** is church just for kids. We meet in the Post Theater on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of the month, 10:45 a.m.- noon. We have skits, puppets, music, and games.


Grafenwoehr German-American Gospel Extravagant

DOWNTOWN PARK

MAY 5, 2007

1400

Free Admission



POC: Master Sgt. Verlene Dickson Tel: CIV 09647-929513 (cell) 01711255400



Historic town dates back to Stone Age



by GARRY BARROWS
Staff writer

You take a conglomeration of buildings founded in 179 during the reign of Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, locate it next to a scenic river, provide a Gothic cathedral with magnificent spires that are visible for miles, and sprinkle in several historic structures including a medieval stone bridge still in use. Add to that restaurants renowned just as much for their food as their centuries-old histories, and many modern conveniences including shopping malls, and it's beginning to look a lot like the nearby city of Regensburg, Bavaria.

A day trip to Regensburg, which has a population of 150,000 and dates back to the Stone Age, is a trip well worth taking. Located directly off Autobahn 3, it's easy to get to.

Take the University exit off the Autobahn, make two quick right turns, and head for the Zentrum (city center).

The city is a remarkable combination of the old and the new. Less than 10 minutes from the exit, you will find yourself in the heart of a beautiful place.

The city center parking garage is a convenient location to park. Before exiting the garage, not the large section of the historic outer wall of the Roman Castra Regina (photo 6), the home post of the Third Italic Legion, built shortly after the founding of the city.

The renowned Regensburg Historisches Museum (photo 2) is just across the street from the garage.

With several Roman columns on the front lawn, you will see a wonderful collection of Roman weapons, coins and armor, as well as many other impressive collections.

A short walk towards the river will lead you to the Portia Praetoria (photo 1), one of the original gates and guard towers of the castle. With typical European usefulness, the historic arch and tower are part of a newer structure being used as office space.

Going through the gate, you will find yourself at the Bischoffhof, one of the finer historic restaurants in the city.

Continue several blocks further to get a view of one of the world's most famous rivers—the Danube, also known as the Donau. It provides much in the way of entertainment, including boat rides that highlight city sites or a trip to Valhalla, a dramatic German 'hall of fame' immortalizing those who made major contributions to German culture. The round trip boat excursion is 7 Euros for adults. Children's tickets are a reduced price with those under 5 riding for free. The Danube also offers a swimming area and canoe rentals (photos 3, 7).

A gaze up the river gives an impressive view of one of the city's many medieval marvels—the legendary Steineren Bruecke (Stone Bridge) erected between 1135 and 1146 (main photo).

Remarkable in its simplicity and awesome in its presence, the bridge served as a model for many bridge projects worldwide, including the Charles Bridge in Prague.

Practically at the foot of the bridge is the Schricker Historische Wurstkuechen (photo 8). This restaurant is at the heart of a long-standing argument between Regensburg and Nuremberg, about 60 miles down the road, concerning which city has the oldest bratwurst restaurant.

That argument aside, any restaurant that has been in business for more than 500 years specializing in the German sausage delicacy is definitely worth a visit ... or two. Patrons can enjoy good food and beer and a view while sitting on the banks of the Danube.

Another must-see while is the majestic twin spires of the Dom, St. Peter's Cathedral (photo 4), located in the center of the Altstadt.

This impressive Gothic structure, begun in the 1280s, is something that will call to you the moment you see the towers. English brochures with many interesting facts about the cathedral are available inside the church.

City tours of Regensburg can be booked just outside the church. As is generally the case in this city, the new and the old blend beautifully to satisfy every visitor's fancy. Modern shopping and the latest fashions are available within 100 meters of the Dom.

The city center offers something to satisfy every palate, from sushi and Italian to Mexican and German cuisine. To top off a great meal, the famed Erste Bayerische Dampfnudel Backerei is nearby and serves a wide variety of desserts and coffee.

And for visitors who don't mind the crowds, Regensburg festivals include its summer Burgerfest June 22-24 and the Christmas Festival in December.

Whether you decide to enjoy the warm weather festivities or the scenic holiday fun, these are two of the endless highlights of this historic city.



12th CAB pilot named aviator of year

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class
CHRIS SEATON

12th Combat Aviation Brigade

A 12th Combat Aviation Brigade chief warrant officer and Apache pilot is the Army Aviation Association of America's Aviator of the Year for 2006.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Philip Learn, an AH-64D Apache pilot from 3-159th Aviation Regiment, will be honored at the association's annual convention May 10 in Atlanta.

Learn took part in a routine air assault mission in Afghanistan when six of what are now 12th Combat Aviation Brigade aircraft and members of the Canadian Special Forces were ordered to perform a raid on a high value target.

As the first aircraft, a CH-47 Chinook, started downward to insert the Canadian soldiers, a rocket propelled grenade struck its side, engulfing the helicopter in flames.

That's when Learn took over.

"There were 10 enemies with small arms and RPGs coming up right on the aircraft as they were trying to land on fire," said Learn.

The pilot quickly redirected a second Chinook, preventing it from landing in the same hostile landing zone. He then turned his attention to the burning aircraft on the ground.

Its crew and 34 passengers were pinned down by intense small arms fire. Within seconds, Learn put his aircraft in a covering position under direct enemy fire.

RPGs crossed under his aircraft, but Learn stayed low and continued to fight until the enemy advance was denied.

Apache pilots are trained to stand off while firing. They learn to provide cover fire without crossing into enemy range. The mountains of Afghanistan make that tactic difficult, said Learn.



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Philip Learn currently serves as an Apache pilot instructor.

"It's hard to pick out individuals in the mountains," he said. "When I was firing, I was about 70 to 100 feet over the downed aircraft trying to provide cover. That was the only way to do it without causing a fratricide."

Learn was in the air for about eight hours that day, engaging enemy forces on the ground, and making several passes, all while dodging enemy fire; making trips back to the forward arming and refueling point just long enough to refuel.

Through his efforts, at the end of the day, the incident ended without a single friendly

casualty.

"That was one of several long days in Afghanistan," he said.

In total, Learn took part in eight large fights during his 12 months in Afghanistan.

He became the most decorated warrant officer in Task Force Storm, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Air Medals with Valor, and three Air Medals.

"He's had a pattern of doing well," said Lt. Col. Don Fallin, commander of the 3-159th Aviation Regt. "A lot of times you'll see senior warrants get these awards. He shows a lot of

maturity and judgment for a guy who's only been flying a few years."

After serving in various positions in and out of the Army as a combat engineer, an air traffic controller, and a police officer, Learn decided to put in a warrant officer packet in 2002, barely making the cutoff age of 29 years old. He graduated the Apache course with honors in 2003.

"My background has made a big difference in my success," he said. "Being able to make hard decisions in violent situations gave me a leg up. Being a prior NCO helped because I know how the Army works."

Learn has moved quickly through the system. A typical Apache pilot becomes a pilot-in-command with somewhere between 500 to 700 hours of flight time. He passed his evaluation with only 348 hours.

He now serves as an Apache pilot instructor. While he realizes that he's still very junior to be an instructor pilot, he also knows that he has the experience to give guidance to newer pilots.

"We were the first Longbow unit to go to Afghanistan," he said. "They're teaching what we learned there at the schoolhouse today. New pilots learn a lot more running fires than when I came through...they only learn a few hovering engagements."

Learn will be with the 12th CAB at least through 2010. While much of the CAB ramps up for a deployment to Iraq, Learn and the 3-159th Aviation Regt. will stay behind, preparing for the next deployment.

His advice for the pilots on the verge of deployment is the same as his advice to his students.

"Stay focused. It's an endurance race, not a sprint. Try not to take unnecessary risks," he said. "Bring the ground forces home safe. That's our job."

Ansbach students graduate from DARE program

Story and photo by
RONALD H. TOLAND Jr.
USAG Ansbach PAO

Thirty-four students graduated from the USAG Ansbach Drug Abuse Resistance Education program during a ceremony April 5 at Rainbow Elementary on Barton Barracks.

DARE is a program run by the provost marshal's office to help arm children to handle some of the pressures of modern life, said Shannon Ritzert, volunteer program officer.

"DARE is designed to teach kids about drugs ... peer pressure, gang pressure, graffiti and things like that," Ritzert said. "The program teaches them the tools and how to apply those tools to deal with drugs and alcohol, awareness about the actual drugs, and awareness on how they are targeted even at a young age."

She added that this awareness provides them with the knowledge they need to read through advertisements, gimmicks and schemes for things like tobacco and alcohol.

The program itself is designed for students in kindergarten through grade 12, but focuses primarily on children in the fifth grade age group, said Ritzert.

"That is when children are most receptive to that kind of information because younger kids do not really know how to apply it and the older kids tend not to."

According to its official Web site, DARE also seeks to establish positive relationships between students and law enforcement, teachers, parents, and other community leaders.

The Web site also mentions that millions of U.S. children in more than 300,000 classrooms in 10,000 communities in all 50 states will benefit from DARE this year. DARE also benefits millions of children in 53 other countries.

Additionally, all Department of Defense Schools worldwide and all U.S. territories have DARE programs in place.

All 34 Ansbach graduates received completion certificates and DARE T-shirts donated with funding from DoDDS.

The top three graduates received additional awards. John Santos, the top graduate, and Joel Connor, second place, received \$100 and \$50 dollar savings bonds each, donated by Bank of America Military Banking, and third place graduate Jacqueline Bosco received a \$25 AAFES gift certificate, donated by the Ansbach PMO.



Thirty-four USAG Ansbach students graduated from the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program during an April 5 ceremony at Barton Barrack's Rainbow Elementary School.



Military spouses got into the action shortly after the MWR paintball operation opened near Soldiers' Lake last year. The event was part of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade's Spouse's Combat Day activities.

*Photo by
Jim Hughes*

Color the competition at paintball field

by **RONALD H. TOLDAND Jr.**
USAG Ansbach PAO

Spring has sprung, and if you're looking for a little outdoor adventure, be sure to look at Morale, Welfare and Recreation's paintball operation located at Soldier's Lake near Shipton Kaserne.

No experience and no equipment is required to get started, just a desire to paint one's fellow community members a different color, said Steven Bocek, chief of outdoor recreation.

"Paintball is the original extreme sport and nothing else even compares to the adventure that awaits you when you step out onto a paintball field for the first time," he said.

Getting started can be a bit confusing at first, Bocek said, as it takes time to learn how to play, what gear is required, and what to expect.

"You don't have to be big and you don't have to be strong. All you need is the desire to play and a paintball marker levels the playing field giving everyone the same chance to compete," he added.

The following is a Q&A session with Bocek on paintball at Ansbach.

Q: What is paintball?

A: Well, a paintball is a spherical capsule with a gelatin covering containing brightly-colored liquid. The paint is non-toxic and washes out of clothes and skin with soap and water. Paintballs are even edible but not necessarily tasty.

As for the games, they're best described as a combination of cops and robbers or hide and seek. Players wear goggles and masks, which we

can rent to them, and they run around on our field or in a wooded area with paintball markers (the guns) and shoot them at each other.

The games typically last from five to 40 minutes with the objective for most games being either capture the flag or elimination, with other variations that can be further explained at the playing site with referees explaining rules and objectives prior to each game.

Unlike the cops and robbers games many of us played as kids, in paintball there is no question about who shot whom. Anytime a player is hit by a paintball and the ball breaks on the player's clothing, skin, or gun, the player is out. Once out, a player must immediately leave the field and to a safe area sometimes called the dead box.

Q: Does it hurt when you get hit?

A: Depending on where you get hit and how close you are standing to your opponent, a paintball may sting or you might not feel it at all. At close range, on bare skin or tight clothing, a paintball can cause a welt. The sting lasts momentarily. Overall, it's not that bad. Actually, knowing it can sting a bit adds excitement to the game.

Q: Will I get shot a lot?

A: Probably not. Most beginning players will tend to hang back and play defense. It's the Rambo wannabes that charge the enemy base and get "lit up."

Q: Should I wear extra padding?

A: Not really. A long-sleeve shirt and denim pants are probably sufficient protection. When you're shooting at safe velocities (under 300 fps,) paintballs don't hurt badly

enough for the average person to concern themselves with extra clothing. You'll probably notice that experienced players wear no additional padding or protection—except maybe a cup for the guys.

That's because being really hot is a lot less comfortable than getting hit with a paintball. The most important pieces of protective gear are goggles and masks. Never wear any type of eye or face protection that wasn't specifically made to withstand the rigors of paintball.

All paintball masks will cover the face. Some masks even offer complete head protection. Choose a mask that fits comfortably and won't slip or fall off when you are running.

Q: Is it scary?

A: No, but paintball is intense. Think of it like a roller coaster. You know the ride is safe but that doesn't stop you from screaming like a baby as you careen through curves at 80 mph! Afterwards you can't stop talking about it with your friends. You laugh and run to get back in line again. That pretty much describes paintball.

Q: What should I bring?

A: Bring water, a couple of towels, snack food, and plenty of cash. A change of clothes for the ride home isn't a bad idea either.

Paintball is offered at Soldiers Lake in Katterbach, with individual and team events and also as unit training. Outdoor Recreation also has all the equipment you need to take part for rent.

If you, a team, or your unit is interested in playing, or for more information, call Bocek at DSN 467-3224 or CIV 09802-833-224.

Community Spotlight

What's Happening

Ansbach Briefs

AFN hits FM in Ansbach

AFN Radio is now available in Ansbach and Illesheim at 107.3 on your radio's FM dial. Tune in for the latest local, Europe, DOD and world news, and also music and entertainment.

Parent-teacher conferences scheduled for Friday

Ansbach Middle/High School hosts parent-teacher conferences Friday during the school day. Teachers will be available to meet with parents during the day and parents can also pick up their child's third quarter report cards at the school.

Parents can call the counselors—Pat Limb for seventh and eighth grades and Gary McCauley for high school—to arrange to meet with individual teachers or the group that their child has. To reach a counselor, call CIV 09802-223. School officials remind parents that parents who work with their students, come to the school often, know their children's teachers and keep in touch with the school help their child to be successful.

Avoid back-up accidents

Garrison safety officials report that there has recently been an increase in the number of accidents within the community involving people backing up. Here are some tips from the safety office to help keep you from joining the accident club:

- Use a ground guide
- Walk around the vehicle to make sure you have the needed clearance
- Give your employees vehicle operations on-the-job training
- Keep it slow when backing up
- Risk Management POV Toolbox

For more safety tips, call DSN 468-1670 or CIV 09802-83-1670.

Need to talk? Call MFLP

The Military and Family Life Program features two licensed civilian therapists from the U.S. who have been contracted to provide free consultation services to Soldiers, their families and civilian personnel. The consultants are here to listen, support and help individuals problem solve. Consultants also make recommendations regarding services available to the client.

Consultants do not take names or record notes on clients to ensure confidentiality. There is one exception: when there is a threat to harm self, others, domestic violence, or abuse noted. Consultants are rotated every four to six weeks to ensure confidentiality. To find out more or to schedule a time to meet with a counselor, call CIV 0160-9835-0753 or CIV 0151-1812-3764.

Re-apply for free, reduced school lunch program

The Department of Defense Education Activity encourages families of children attending overseas schools to reapply for free and reduced price school lunches. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently approved a DODEA request for an increase in the reimbursement rate and more families may now qualify for the program. For more information and instructions on how to apply for the program, call your child's school.

Substance abuse program gets rated, feedback needed

U.S. Army Europe's substance abuse programs will receive an inspection by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospital Organizations May 7-9 in Heidelberg. JACHO will not visit the USAG Ansbach area, but the organization does want to hear from members of the community. If you have feedback you'd like to give the inspectors, call DSN 468-1710 or CIV 0981-183-1710.

Idling illegal in Germany

German road regulations prohibit car idling on and off post, report garrison environmental specialists. They add that car idling pollutes the environment through the emission of carbon monoxide, and oxides of nitrogen and other volatile compounds, and add to the Greenhouse Effect destroying the

ozone layer. For more information, call the environmental office at DSN 467-3423 or CIV 09802-83-3423.

Kinderfest slated April 28

Katterbach School Age Services hosts a kinder fest in honor of the Month of the Military Child April 28 11 a.m.-2 p.m. in Bldg. 5515. The event will include inflatable bouncers, mechanical bull riding, clowns, music, games and food. For more information, call DSN 467-4703 or CIV 09841-834-703.

Illesheim fitness classes

Yoga is offered at Bunch Fitness Center in Illesheim Mondays from 6-7 p.m. and Fridays from 5-6 p.m. Circuit Training is taught Thursdays from 1-2 p.m. For more information, call DSN 467-4582 or CIV 09841-834-582/998.

New fitness programs offered

Katterbach Fitness Center has added new instructors and classes.

- Heather teaches Muscle Pump on Mondays 8:30- 9:30 a.m. Using a variety of hand weights and resistance bands, you will get a total body workout in just one hour.
- On Wednesdays, Heather teaches Core & More 8:30-9:30 a.m. This is an interval class and exercises will be broken up with short abdominal segments which give you core strengthening and work your lower body and back.
- Step Aerobics takes place Thursdays 10-11 a.m. and then Pilates 11:45-12:45.

- Patricia teaches Turbo-Kick on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at Barton 9:30-10:30 a.m. and at Katterbach Tuesdays 5-6 p.m., and Fridays 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- Patricia also teaches Toning/Glutes 10:45-11 a.m. on Wednesdays at Katterbach and Fridays 10:45-11 a.m. at the Barton gym.
- Indoor cycling is taught by Clarissa on Mondays from 6-7 p.m., Tuesdays 9:30-10:30 a.m., and Wednesdays 5-6 p.m. Thirty minutes before each indoor cycling class, a 15-minute abdominal class is taught.

Stop by the Katterbach Fitness Center to sign up or get a schedule. Classes are \$3 for an hour, \$1 for 15 minutes or you can purchase a \$30 punch card used in all classes. For more information, call DSN 467-2771 or CIV 09802-832-771/810.

Get VAT adjusted off utility bills, visit Tax Relief today

Community members living in Ansbach, Bad Windsheim or Heilsbronn with electric, gas and water bills in their own name can have the Value Added Tax adjusted off of their bills. Go to the tax relief office in building 5845 on Bismarck Kaserne and fill out an application. If the utility bills are in their landlord's name, then people cannot get the tax relief. For more info, call DSN 468-1780 or CIV 09802-83-1780.

Prepare for the job market with OSEA program

The Overseas Spouse Education Assistance program helps with the costs of post secondary undergraduate level education and vocational training to prepare Army spouses for the job market. To be eligible, you must be the spouse of an active duty Army soldier and reside with the soldier at the assigned command. For academic year 2005-2007 applications will be accepted online. Forms are available at <http://www.aerhq.org>. The deadline for accepting applications is April 30. For more information, call Sarah Tipple, CIV 09802-832-064 or DSN 467-2064.

Lt. Dan Band set to perform

The Lt. Dan Band, headed by Gary Sinise of "Forrest Gump" and "CSI: New York" fame, will play at USAG Ansbach May 9 at 7 p.m. The free concert will take place in Hangar 2 on Katterbach Kaserne and the area will open up at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call DSN 468-7636 or CIV 0981-183-636. If you're from another garrison, ask your local MWR about a bus to the event.

Scholarships available to Ansbach community

Scholarships are available for qualifying students graduating from the

Ansbach High School, dependent children attending an accredited university or vocational school whose sponsor is currently stationed in Ansbach, or spouses registered with an accredited university.

The scholarship application includes an information sheet, Privacy Act statement, scholarship application form, three forms for letters of recommendation, and an assessment sheet. All information provided remains confidential. All scholarship awards will be paid directly to the college or vocational school by ASCC upon registration confirmation. Scholarship applications are due to ASCC no later than May 1. A total of \$6,500 will be awarded in scholarships this year. To receive an application packet, contact Sarah Tipple at CIV 09802-832-883 or e-mail sarah.tipple@us.army.mil.

Bamberg Briefs

Free training offered for respite care providers

Are you a dependable and caring individual motivated by a desire to serve family members with disabilities? If so, contact the Bamberg Exceptional Family Member Program manager and learn how to become a Respite Care provider. The training is free and providers can earn up to \$35 per hour per child. For more information please contact the ACS, EFMP manager Sylvia Gerstner at DSN 469-7777 or CIV 0951-300-7777.

Volunteer of the Year nominations due by Friday

Nominations for Volunteer of the Year are due by Friday. Say 'thanks' by nominating a deserving community volunteer to be honored at the annual volunteer recognition ceremony. Nominations can be made in the following categories: family member, active duty, youth, outstanding volunteer agency, individual unit (FRG) or civilian (non-soldier or family member). To request an electronic application, send an e-mail to kimberly.millner@eur.army.mil or call DSN 469-7777. This year's volunteer recognition ceremony will take place May 23 at the Warner Club.

Dachau trip marks National Days of Remembrance

In observance of the National Days of Remembrance, the Bamberg Equal Opportunities office invites Soldiers, family members, and civilians to take part in a trip to the Dachau Museum and concentration camp April 26. A commercial bus will leave Bldg. 7000 at 6:30 a.m. Participants will visit the camp from 9 a.m. to noon, and then tour the city of Munich afterwards. The bus arrives back in Bamberg around 7 p.m. This trip is free. To reserve a seat, contact SFC Freeman at 469-8624 by Monday.

Find out how alcohol affects your health tomorrow

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. In conjunction with National Alcohol Screening Day, the Bamberg Army Substance Abuse Program will be hosting an information booth at the commissary lobby tomorrow. Stop by to find out how alcohol may be affecting your health or the health of a loved one 11:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Fill out a self-assessment survey and enter to win a prize. For more information, contact the Bamberg ASAP at DSN 469-7038.

BSCC spring luncheon slated for April 26

The Bamberg Spouses' and Civilians' Club invites you to attend their spring "Singing in the Rain" luncheon April 26, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Bamberg Warner Club. RSVP by Monday to bscc_reservations@hotmail.com.

Clean-up, tee-off Saturday

Come out and lend a hand on Saturday at the annual Whispering Pines golf course clean-up at 9 a.m. All helpers can participate in a free 9-hole tournament and barbeque immediately following. The clean-up will be postponed in the event of inclement weather. For more info, call CIV 0951-300-8953.

Vote on Bamberg Elementary dress code policy May 21-25

Have your say! Voting on the Bamberg Elementary School dress code policy will be held in the elementary school lobby May 21-25, 8-10 a.m. and noon-1 p.m. and May 29-30, 8-10 a.m., noon-1 p.m., and 5-6 p.m. One vote per family with children attending BES during school year 07/08. For more information, contact Kim Kozel, School Liaison Officer, at DSN 469-7891 or CIV 09510300-7891.

BES Spring Registration

Registration is required for all new and returning students. Spring Registration dates are now through Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. (closed for lunch 1-2 p.m.) Registration personnel from the Middle School/ High School will be at BES tomorrow to register families with children in both schools. For returning students, make certain we have current orders on file before registering. Parents are welcome to call to verify at CIV 0951-300-7616.

Schweinfurt Briefs

Lunch Bunch to visit Seufert

The ACS Lunch Bunch will make a visit to the Seufert Ranch April 26. This monthly get together is open to everyone, and children are welcome! Meet at 11 a.m. at the Ledward ACS, or 11:30 at the ranch, located at Heinrichweg 5 in Hambach. Bring Euro for lunch, and enjoy a midday treat with some old friends, or make some new ones! Call ACS to RSVP at DSN 354-6933 or CIV 09721-96-6933.

Kinder Olympics set Saturday

The USAG Schweinfurt SKIES Unlimited program will host the Kinder Olympics Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Dickman Field, across from the PX, on Leighton Barracks in Wuerzburg. Children 2-18 years old are welcome to participate in this free event. Bring a picnic lunch and enjoy a day of track and field events with your community. For more information, call DSN 350-6608 or CIV 0931-889-6608, DSN 354-6460 or CIV 09721-96-6460.

Skate party held by PTA

The Schweinfurt Elementary School PTA will host a Skate Party April 27 4-6 p.m. in the SES parking lot. Children must be accompanied by an adult, and must wear a helmet. Food and drinks will be available for purchase. The PTA will hold their 2007-2008 board elections during the event. In case of rain, event will be rescheduled to May 4.

Meet your BOSS reps

The USAG Schweinfurt Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers will host a meet and greet tomorrow, 3-9 p.m. at the Finney Recreation Center on Conn Barracks. Come meet your local BOSS representatives, put in your two cents about the direction the BOSS program will take, and enjoy free food, music, and entertainment. Transportation from Wuerzburg to Conn will be provided. Contact your BOSS representative for more information.

Wuerzburg commissary closed Tuesday for reset

The Wuerzburg commissary will close Tuesday at 6 p.m. in order to conduct a store reset. The commissary will reopen April 27 at 10 a.m.

School registration dates

- Schweinfurt Elementary School: Today-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- Schweinfurt Middle School: Through tomorrow, 8 a.m.-noon.
- Wuerzburg High School: Tomorrow, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Abrams Club, and Friday, 8:15 a.m.-noon, and 1-3 p.m., at the school.

Benefit auction set tomorrow

The Wuerzburg Community Spouses' Club will host a luncheon and benefit auction tomorrow, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. in the Leighton Community Activities Center. Proceeds will benefit the Landstuhl Wounded Warrior Fund. Lunch is included for a \$5 entry fee.

Red Cross offers adult CPR, first aid classes Saturday

The USAG Schweinfurt Red Cross will offer a class in Adult CPR and first aid Saturday, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. in Schweinfurt. There will also be a first aid class offered April 28, 8 a.m.-noon in Wuerzburg. For more information, call the Red Cross, DSN 354-1760 or CIV 09721-96-1760.

Sign up for parents' night out, scheduled for Friday

Sign up now for parents' night out respite care Friday, 6:30 p.m.-11 p.m. in Leighton and Schweinfurt. Children will be cared for at no cost to families. It is open to all families with children ages six weeks to fifth grade. Children must be registered with CYS. Call DSN 354-6517 or 350-7762 for more information.

Join USO for trip to Amsterdam flower parade

Travel with the Schweinfurt USO to Amsterdam for the flower parade Friday-Sunday. The trip is \$105 for adults, \$100 for children. Call CIV 09721-96-6711.



Pay closer attention to hazards

As the weather warms up, and we begin to enjoy the outdoors, remember to think safety first in all you do. Paying close attention to safety helps keep Soldiers, their families, and civilians alive.

Staying safe is the primary mission of everyone in the USAG Schweinfurt and, as the commander, I am also your safety officer.

Every member of our family plays a vital role in protecting our force from accidents, injuries, and the loss of resources through negligence or unsafe acts.

Every mission and aspect of our daily lives requires our Soldiers, families, and civilians to raise their awareness and pay a little closer attention to safety.

You can assess risks by identifying hazards in whatever you are about to do. Determine what effect the hazard would have on you.

We call this risk assessment, and you can use it in everyday life simply to reduce risks and keep yourself safe.

Lack of sleep, bad weather, or exhausting training can all take their toll on us and reduce our ability to remain safe. We need to be vigilant.

We all need to take a closer look at the things we do and ask ourselves what potential hazards we face, if any, and how we can reduce the risk.

Every Soldier, civilian and family member is a critical part of the USAG Schweinfurt team. We can't afford to lose anyone – not even for a short period of time. Be safe!

*Lt. Col. Anthony Haager
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Schweinfurt*



Community honors 'Sapper'

by MARK HEETER
USAG Schweinfurt PAO

Mickey kicks doors good. That was the simple citation that Spc. Sean K. McDonald wanted on an award for training in Kuwait, before he headed into Iraq last year.

Family, friends, the Schweinfurt community, and the 2nd Brigade Combat Team bid farewell to McDonald in a memorial service at the Ledward Chapel April 5.

McDonald, 21, of Company A, 9th Engineer Battalion, was killed in Iraq by an improvised



McDonald

exploding device in Baghdad, Iraq, March 25.

"He knew the right thing to say to make you feel better when you were upset," said Pfc. Seth Gordon, reading remarks that Sgt. Joshua Staderman, McDonald's team leader, gave at an earlier memorial service.

"Mickey loved numbers and doing math," Stoderman said, telling the story of a time when he had to turn to "Mickey D," as he was called, for assistance.

"After that day, and math problem, I took it to him," Staderman said.

Gordon also read the remarks of Pfc. Travis Yazzie, who described the tension between himself and McDonald, before the two became roommates and friends.

"I didn't like him, and he didn't like me. But for some reason, he would always stick up for me and the squad," said Yazzie.

"He overcame that, and we became friends," Yazzie said. "The truth is, I will never have another friend like Sean McDonald."

McDonald's commander, Capt. Geoff McKenzie recalled him as a bright, talented and energetic young man in a speech relayed at the ceremony by Capt. Chad Ramskugler.

"As a Pfc., he immediately took charge of his peers and led us through the training to prepare us for combat," McKenzie said.

Ramskugler also read the remarks of Lt. Col. Glen Masset, the 9 ENG commander.

"Spc. McDonald is a true American hero," Masset said.

"He has been, and will remain, a Sapper in our ranks," he said.

McDonald is survived by his mother, Magdalena M. Aalten, and his father and sister, Russell and Jessica McDonald.

'Mathlete' makes the cut ... again!

Story and photo by
KIMBERLY GEARHART
USAG Schweinfurt PAO

A train traveling north from Washington to New York travels an average of 65 miles per hour. Another train, traveling south along the same route, and leaving at the same time, averages 70 miles per hour.

For many of us, that is the beginning of a recurrent nightmare left over from high school algebra classes.

For Daniel Mikkelsen, it's fun. Of course Mikkelsen isn't your average seventh-grader either.

Mikkelsen is a member of the Schweinfurt Middle School MATHCOUNTS team. MATHCOUNTS is a nationwide competition where middle school "Mathletes" compete for math supremacy.

Each year, more than 500,000 students participate at the school level. Forty thousand of those will actually make the team. Of those 40,000, 228 Mathletes score well enough to compete in the nationals.

Mikkelsen made the cut—again. This will be his second year advancing to national competition.

"Last year, I went in feeling like the underdog," Mikkelsen said. He was the youngest on his team, and one of the few sixth-grade participants to advance so far.

This year, Mikkelsen goes to nationals as team leader.

"Daniel is a unique person, and he accepts that, but he doesn't let it go to his head," said Steven Richman, math instructor and MATHCOUNTS coach at SMS.

The majority of MATHCOUNTS problems are algebra-based, and very advanced for sixth-grade students.

Each year, interest in the MATHCOUNTS team at SMS grows. That trend excites Richman.

"It's about generating enthusiasm for math. The idea is to learn how to do the math, and have fun. I try to draw the sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders in, to get them interested in math ... but there are 20 percent of the problems that even I don't figure out," Richman said.

Mikkelsen figures he gets about 60 percent of the answers, but every day, he gets a little better.

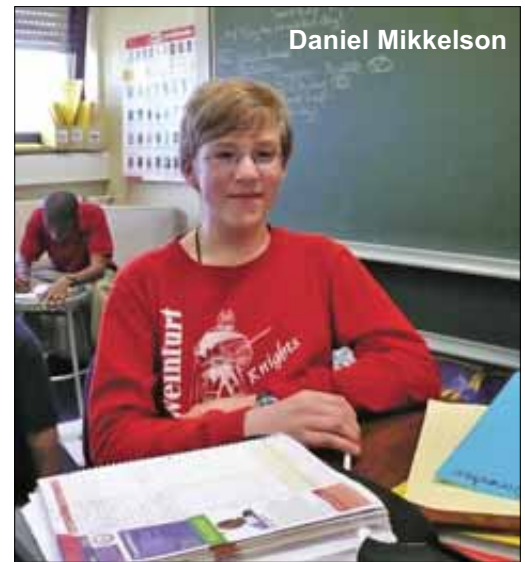
"It really does help you develop better math skills, and it's fun," he said.

Mikkelsen will return to national competition in Fort Worth, Texas, May 11. His goal this

year—be in the top 100.

"I really just want to do better than last year," Mikkelsen said.

If you are interested in MATHCOUNTS, or want to try your hand at problems from previous competitions, visit <http://www.mathcounts.org/>



Experience Germany in English, on a budget

by SANDRA WILSON
USAG Schweinfurt PAO

So you find yourself in Germany—whether or not by choice—and it's time to get to know the country and people you live around.

What better way to tour the area than with an English guide and provided transportation?

On March 19, Army Community Service took 27 people from the community on a tour of the Wuerzburger Hofbrau Brewery. The cost was 2 Euro per person and included transportation from Schweinfurt to Wuerzburg and an

English tour of the factory.

Michael Payne, who attended the brewery tour, talked about the unlimited taste-testing segment of the tour.

Payne said attendees were given pretzels and allowed to drink as much as they wanted. They also learned about Germany's beer-making process.

"It reinforces the fact that beer is made so much better here than it is in the States," he said.

In addition to the brewery tour, ACS plans to conduct more outings on the German economy.

"(We want) to make this experience of living over here more

enjoyable and take the fear out of people," said Becky Brown, relocation cultural integration program coordinator at ACS in Wuerzburg.

In the coming months a trip to a "spargel" (white asparagus) farm will be scheduled. Participants will be allowed to harvest asparagus and learn several ways to prepare it.

"There's so much to see in Europe," said Beate Williams, relocation readiness program manager at ACS in Schweinfurt.

Another tour on the calendar is a visit to a privately-owned winery. The farmer offers an opportunity to harvest some grapes, and then learn

how he makes the wine in his basement. Wine tasting, of course, is on the menu as well.

"It's a great opportunity that not many people, even Germans, get to experience," Brown said about the unique trips ACS will offer in the near future.

Some of the most attractive aspects of ACS coordinating the trips is that transportation is provided, tours are available in English, and the excursions are relatively inexpensive.

The next trip is planned April 27 to learn how to shop on the German economy.

Those interested will meet at ACS and use the city bus system to travel

downtown. Aside from the bus ride, the tour is free.

These trips help community members experience German culture and be adventurous, said Williams. The ease of following a tour guide helps to calm the fear of the unknown.

These ACS outings, however, aren't the only way to orientate residents to the German culture.

The Schweinfurt Newcomer Awareness Program for Spouses, or SNAPS, available in Schweinfurt and Newcomer's Orientation and Welcome Program, or N.O.W., available in Wuerzburg, are also designed to show participants what the city has to offer.

Training area allows exercise to stretch across Bavaria

Story and photo by MARK HEETER
USAG Schweinfurt PAO

The U.S. Army Europe Training Support Center (TSC), Schweinfurt, has everything from protractors and training aids to a rotary-wing drop zone and 6,815 acres of land.

"There's this myth that goes around United States Army, Europe, that units can't train at home station, so we were stunned when we got up here and found this place," said Lt. Col. Jody Petery, from the Joint Maneuver Readiness Training Center in Hohenfels.

For the past three weeks, Petery, the Task Force Grizzlies senior observer-controller, has been evaluating the 173rd (Airborne) Brigade's mission rehearsal exercise, including a large chunk of the training at Camp Robertson training area, north of Schweinfurt.

"This training area is about as good as anything we've seen anywhere else," Petery said, noting that Camp Robertson is one of several maneuver areas used for the exercise, including Bonnland, the Military Operations in Urban Terrain site near the Hammelburg infantry school.

And the planners obtained maneuver rights to traverse the countryside between Schweinfurt and Hammelburg—a 35-by-15-kilometer swath, he said.

"So the actual training space is bigger now than what's available even at Hohenfels, because we go from Schweinfurt to Bonnland and everything in between," Petery said.

"Area Mike (near Schweinfurt) is exceptional, and the area of Bonnland is probably about six times bigger than any MOUT site, any urban area we have at Hohenfels," he added.

That ability to use Camp Robertson was not lost on the training Soldiers, either.

"I think it's absolutely fantastic that the exercise can stretch the command and control system of the brigade and the squadron," said Lt. Col. Christopher Kolenda, commander of the Schweinfurt-based 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment.

All the players on the battlefield, which stretched from the German-Austria border to northern Bavaria, were connected through the 173rd Brigade headquarters, which was established at the JMRC.

"It's a terrific training event that JMRC has put together in conjunction with the Schweinfurt garrison to support our MRX," Kolenda said.

The staff of the TSC, Schweinfurt, go as far as they can to meet units' training needs, and they ask their counterparts around Europe for assistance when necessary, said Daniel Cintron,



While their comrades continue to fight mock insurgents, Soldiers search the personal effects of an "enemy fighter" they chased into the woods in the Camp Robertson training area.

chief, TSC, Schweinfurt.

"There's a lot of units that don't know our capabilities right now," Cintron said.

Camp Robertson is a good example.

"A lot of units don't know that we have a certified obstacle course, rappelling towers, mess area and ammo point. We have an area that we do maintenance here. We also have this place

set up as a forward operating base," he said.

The TSC, Schweinfurt also hosts a fully certified course for air-assault course, pathfinder, expert infantryman badge and expert field medical badge.

Last year, Soldiers trained for roughly 86,000 man-days at Camp Robertson and the Victory Training Center, according to Cintron.

Clap-happy or age-old tradition?

Germans pay homage with their hands

by MARTINA BIAS

Bavarian News Food & Culture Columnist

Sometimes when I am asked questions about German culture, it causes me to stop and think about habits that I had never noticed before.

This happened when my husband came home recently and asked me “Why do Germans like to clap so much?”

After I gave the matter some thought, I realized that he was right. We do seem to clap more than Americans.

There are several distinct occasions when Germans feel the need to make a joyous noise with their hands.

The first, of course, is when they hear music. Germans love to clap along with the beat – and very stolidly.

You will find that they clap on the first and third beats of the bar, as if they were accompanying a regiment marching by.

It is a sound you sometimes get at the end of a concert when everyone in the hall is clapping loudly but randomly, and then the separate claps suddenly coagulate into one enormous, repeated beat as everyone claps at the same time.

This is typical for a German audience at a music show, especially when Volksmusik (folk music) is being played, as the enthusiastic crowd provides the rhythm for a delighted performer.

Then there’s the German clapping dance. “Schuhplattln” is a traditional Bavarian dance where young men in Lederhosen slap their



Courtesy photo

The traditional Bavarian dance “Schuhplattln” gives Germans an opportunity to clap out the beat on their shoes, legs, hands, and thighs.

shoes, legs, hands, and thighs to the beat of songs that have been passed down from generation to generation.

A location that may startle you when the Germans around you start applauding is an airplane. It is common for Germans to clap after the plane has safely touched down.

In an age where airplane travel is

an everyday occurrence for many, this may seem a little outdated, but it still occasionally takes place, especially on planes carrying tourists who do not fly often. It is a sign of appreciation to the pilot for a safe journey.

Another place where you will encounter Germans clapping is the

soccer stadium.

While most American sports fans show their enthusiasm by shouting, most German soccer fans will use a rhythmic clapping chant that would sound familiar to fans of the old New York Cosmos: “clap-clap-clapclapclap-clapclap-clapclap, Deutschland (or fill in your favorite

soccer team’s name)!”

There is yet another difference between English and German fan culture. Americans sing long songs while Germans do more chanting and clapping. The songs, for Germans, are mostly one-liners.

Considering Germany’s love of clapping, there is an odd occasion where clapping is considered the wrong response and “knocking” becomes the appropriate thing to do to show one’s appreciation.

In an academic context, at university or at a conference, applauding could be misunderstood as an attempt to ridicule the lecturer. To a German, it does not show the proper respect.

One German student remarked that it would make it look like a comedy show rather than an event in a learning environment.

No one tells students to knock their first day at the university, but it’s understood, handed down from generation to generation, without the individual quite knowing why.

Oh yes, there is one more place where you shouldn’t clap: a German church.

Unless you are in a contemporary service (very rare in this country), Germans keep the music very controlled and calm.

To clap or not to clap? – Now you know!

Have you ever wondered why Germans do certain things? I welcome your questions and comments. E-mail me at martina.bias@us.army.mil, and I may be able to address your suggestions in a future column.

Milder white asparagus more common in Germany

Spargelroellchen: a melted ham and cheese dish that is sure to become a family favorite

by MARTINA BIAS

Bavarian News Food & Culture Columnist

Spring is the season for asparagus in Germany. Unlike the green asparagus you may be accustomed to in the United States, Germans prefer the white variety.

White asparagus is grown covered in mounds of sandy soil so that it never sees the light of day until the moment it is harvested. Green asparagus, on the other hand, grows freely in flat beds and is exposed to the sunlight so it can develop the chlorophyll that turns it green.

Many people claim that white asparagus has a milder taste than the heartier green version. However, there are variations in taste depending on where the asparagus was grown, the climate, soil conditions, etc.

Many Germans, therefore, like to purchase their asparagus from the same grower each year. About 25 percent of all asparagus harvested in Germany is sold directly from the farmer to the consumer, either right at the field or at the farmer’s market.

In Bavaria, you can find asparagus fields in the area between Wuerzburg, Kitzingen,

Volkach, around Bamberg, in the Nuernberg “garlic country”, around the towns of Abensberg and Straubing, as well as Schrobenhausen, and into the “Hallertau” along A 93.

The season for purchasing fresh white asparagus in Germany starts at the beginning of April and ends on June 24 (this date is called the Asparagus’ New Year’s Eve)

How to prepare fresh white asparagus:

First remove all wooden ends generously. When peeling asparagus, always move the blade from the tip of the stalk towards the bottom.

On a green asparagus stalk, only the bottom third needs to be peeled, but on the white asparagus, you should start right below the head. When peeling asparagus it is better to peel more than not enough.

Keep in mind that the ends and peels can be cooked and provide a great broth that can be the base for a tasty asparagus cream soup.

In general, asparagus is boiled, but it may also be steamed or fried. If you chose the boiling method, very little water should be used (just enough to cover the stalks). Adding a little salt to the cooking water will seal in flavor.

You can also use the broth you made from the peels and ends to cook the spears in. In any case, don’t forget to add a pinch of sugar and a small piece of butter along with the asparagus stalks.

White asparagus should cook about 20 minutes at low heat in a covered saucepan (green asparagus about 10 – 15 minutes).

You can test for doneness by sticking a cake tester in the end. The pros cook “Spargel” in a standing position in a special “Spargeltopf” (asparagus pot). That way, the ends are boiled and the tender tips are steamed.

Germans like to serve their white asparagus



Courtesy photos

White asparagus with ham and cheese can be a tasty addition to any meal.

along side some boiled “new” potatoes, with melted butter or sauce hollandaise. The meats that this delicacy is often paired with are ham in any form, as well as small Schnitzel or steaks.

Another favorite use for white asparagus among German housewives and restaurant chefs is in Spargelcremesuppe (cream of asparagus soup) or Spargelsalat (marinated asparagus salad).

My favorite way to enjoy asparagus is the following recipe that was handed down to me by my grandparents. It can be prepared with fresh or canned, white or green asparagus, so our family enjoys it all year long.

Spargelroellchen

12 slices of fully cooked ham
12 slices of American cheese
600 grams (or about 22 oz.) freshly cooked or canned asparagus, green or

white

½ cup of vegetable oil
2 eggs, slightly beaten
1 cup unseasoned bread crumbs

Place a ham slice on a plate. Top with a slice of cheese. Place four to five stalks (depending on thickness) of asparagus on top of cheese, letting the ends extend over the edge of the ham.

Roll up starting on the short end of ham slice. Secure with a toothpick. Repeat with remaining ham, cheese and asparagus.

Pour beaten eggs on a shallow plate. Pour breadcrumbs on another shallow plate.

Heat the oil in large skillet. Turn ham rolls first in beaten egg, then in breadcrumbs.

Fry on both sides until golden brown. (Yes, the cheese will start to ooze out, but the crispy cheese is my family’s favorite part of this dish).

Yield: 12 Spargelroellchen



Grown underground, white asparagus doesn’t develop color-inducing chlorophyll.

Undefeated Falcons down Hanau

Story and photo by BILYANA ATOVA
Staff writer

In the first game of four played at the Grafenwoehr Fitness Center March 31, the Vilseck High School boys varsity soccer team defeated Hanau High School 4-1 to launch the team to a season record of 3 and 0.

Although Hanau is in a different conference than the Vilseck team, Coach Bill Ratcliff said it was a significant game because it counted toward their overall record.

The game started with a moment of silence in honor of the team captain, John Watsek, who died in a traffic accident March 5.

Team member Kyed Najdawi opened the scoring early in the first period, giving the Falcons the lead.

Hanau scored later in the period, and the game went to the break tied.

The Falcons regained their lead when Jake Skells scored at the beginning of the second half.

Skells landed the Falcons another goal, and Najdawi nearly scored another goal, but it was blocked.

The fourth and final goal was scored when a Hanau defender redirected a corner kick into their own



The Varisty Falcons’ Erik Bindinger assisted his team in a 4-1 win against Hanau March 31 at Vilseck.

net.

“You played well, communicated well, and I am very proud of you because you played as a team,” said Ratcliff to the team shortly after the game.

“Sometimes it takes adversity to bring team together, and we have faced adversity with the loss of John.”

In the day’s other games, the Falcon Girls Varsity team played to a 1-1 draw with Hanau.

The Falcons boys and girls JV teams were defeated 1-0 and 2-0, respectively.

After a three-week hiatus, the Falcons will return Saturday to play Black Forest Academy in Vilseck.



Civilian Fitness

Megan Stockdill, learning impaired aid at Schweinfurt Elementary School, stretches to test her flexibility during a Civilian Fitness Program assessment March 20 as Sean Colvin, Finney Fitness Center worker, takes the measurement.

This year’s Civilian Fitness program was off to a great start as participants in Schweinfurt and Wuerzburg participated in fitness assessments. The program is authorized by the Department of the Army and gives civilian employees three free hours of paid leave per week to work out and get fit.

Courtesy photo

Principal reads from school roof to fulfill lost wager

Continued From Page 1

Doughnuts for Dads,” during which parents and children were able to cozy-up in a corner and read together before beginning their workday.

Parents weren’t the only community members supporting the program, however. Many organizations contributed to the success of this year’s Red Hot Readers.

“We’d have to just thank the organizations,” said Gillies, “because I have no idea how many people helped us.

“There was the (Parent Teacher Student Association), the (Vilseck Community and Spouses Club), the Strykers helped in several capacities, the post librarian, the cheerleaders and JROTC students came over from the high school with Maj. Farley, who read the book he wrote,” she said.

According to Gillies, 2d SCR Soldiers played a significant role in the program, some spending their Friday evenings reading to children at the library’s weekly “Bed Time Stories,” while others took time out from their busy workday to read a story from the back of a Stryker vehicle.

Parents, however, play the most important role in raising their children to read, and although Red Hot Readers Month has come to an end, both Diaz and Gillies encourage parents to keep kids motivated and excited about reading.

“Participation in family reading is one of the prerequisites of children becoming better readers,” said Gillies. “Children who are exposed to reading in the home are taught to value reading and therefore, read more and, thus, become better readers.”

But moreover, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, children who read with their parents have a higher intelligence and reading ability. Statistics also show that they are better able to comprehend language, it improves their communication skills, speech recognition, and verbal ability.

Here are a few steps to help your child become life-long readers.

What you can do at home

1. Be reading role models. Children’s lifelong habits start to form at the earliest ages, often by mimicking older members of the family.
2. Read aloud to your child. It will help your child to learn the language of books and encourages the enjoyment of books and reading.
3. Talk about books together—make reading a shared, enjoyable activity.
4. Make reading materials available - see that there is a range of reading material for your child at home, both fiction and

non-fiction.

5. Read to your child in your first language. Research shows that using your first language will help your child when he or she learns to read English.
6. Try not to let television intrude on reading time. Set aside some uninterrupted time to read with

your child.

7. Listen to your child read every day, even if only for a short time.
8. Give books as treats and presents.
9. Discuss the meanings of stories and words.
10. Join your local library. Borrow books for yourself and your child.



Courtesy photo

VES principal Nancy Hammack fulfilled a lost wager by reading to students from the school roof March 29.

EIB competition is the ‘Super Bowl’ for infantrymen

Continued From Page 1

“It takes three weeks to get one group through (the entire process),” said 2d Squadron Operations NCOIC Master Sgt. Joseph Dallas, “but once you’ve earned your EIB, you never have to do this again.”

During the week of training, Soldiers who have passed the prerequisite are rotated through each task they will face in EIB testing.

“This is the pre-test, so they know what to work on,” said Sgt. 1st Class Randy Johnson of 2-2 SCR F Co.

“It’s like pre-season,” he explained.

“(Soldiers) get to practice for the big game.”

During the two days of testing, the participants face 33 Soldier tasks, including:

- employing and recovering an M-18 A-1 claymore mine
- applying first aid
- arming and throwing a hand grenade
- protecting against nuclear, biological and chemical attack
- zeroing a laser aiming

device

- assembling and disassembling an M-240 B machine gun
- loading and firing a M-2 .50- caliber machine gun

To complete the testing successfully, each Soldier can receive no more than two “no-go’s.” Soldiers that complete the training without mistakes are deemed “true blue.”

Though the Army-wide EIB pass rate averages around 50 percent, Ogden is hopeful that the regiment will

surpass this mark.

And from the sounds of it, these Stryker infantrymen are determined to surpass the 50 percent mark as well.

“Some guys are doing study halls,” said 1-2SCR Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Boom, “they’re staying up all night, burning the mid-night oil, practicing for EIB because that’s what will distinguish them from their brothers,” he said.

“But even those who don’t earn the EIB, they’ll still be much more proficient infantrymen,” said Boom, “just from going through the

training.”

2SCR Soldiers are determined to get more out of this than just training, however. They want that little blue pin.

That’s why each day, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. these men are focused on the task at hand, precisely executing each step, hoping to get a “go” for each of the 33 they must complete.

And hopefully at the end of this stressful, three-week process these men will have earned the right to wear the EIB, a long standing symbol of expertise and mastery of all things Infantry.

Sports Briefs

Youth bowling league playing

Every Saturday at 11 a.m. Bring the whole family to the Vilseck Bowling Center! For more info, call DSN 476-2576.

Personalized yoga classes available

Vilseck classes are at the Rose Barracks Fitness Center: “Yoga for All”, Mondays 2-3 p.m.; prenatal yoga, Fridays 2-3:15 p.m.; postpartum yoga, Fridays 3:30-4:45 p.m.; and yoga, Fridays 5:15-6:15 p.m. For information, call DSN 476-2998.

Grafenwoehr classes are at the Grafenwoehr Physical Fitness Center: yoga Mondays 10-11:15 a.m., “Yoga for All”, Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-11:15 a.m.; prenatal yoga, Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.; and postpartum yoga, Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-2:15 p.m. For information, call DSN 475-9007.

Register now for track and field

Register now through April 30: Register at the Rose Barracks Fitness Center in Vilseck, or for more information call DSN 476-2998.

Mountain biking club offered at ODR

Join and receive free rides on Mondays now through September; free maintenance classes; and discounts on mountain bike trips. Call ODR Graf at DSN 475-7402 or Vilseck at DSN 476-2563.

Customs Office offers tips for home-based business

Continued From Page 1

not running a business if you sell only personal items infrequently.

So are you running a business? Do you need a German tax number or even a U.S. tax ID? “To answer these and other questions, talk to your installation commercial affairs office to be sure where you stand,” Kuik concluded.

You can also download the pertinent directive, Army in Europe Regulation 210-70 or USAFE Instruction 211-16 (On-Post Commercial Solicitation), to get further information.

For more information on this and other customs issues, contact your local USAG-Grafenwoehr Customs office at DSN 476-2105 and USAG-Hohenfels